

ON MIRACLES

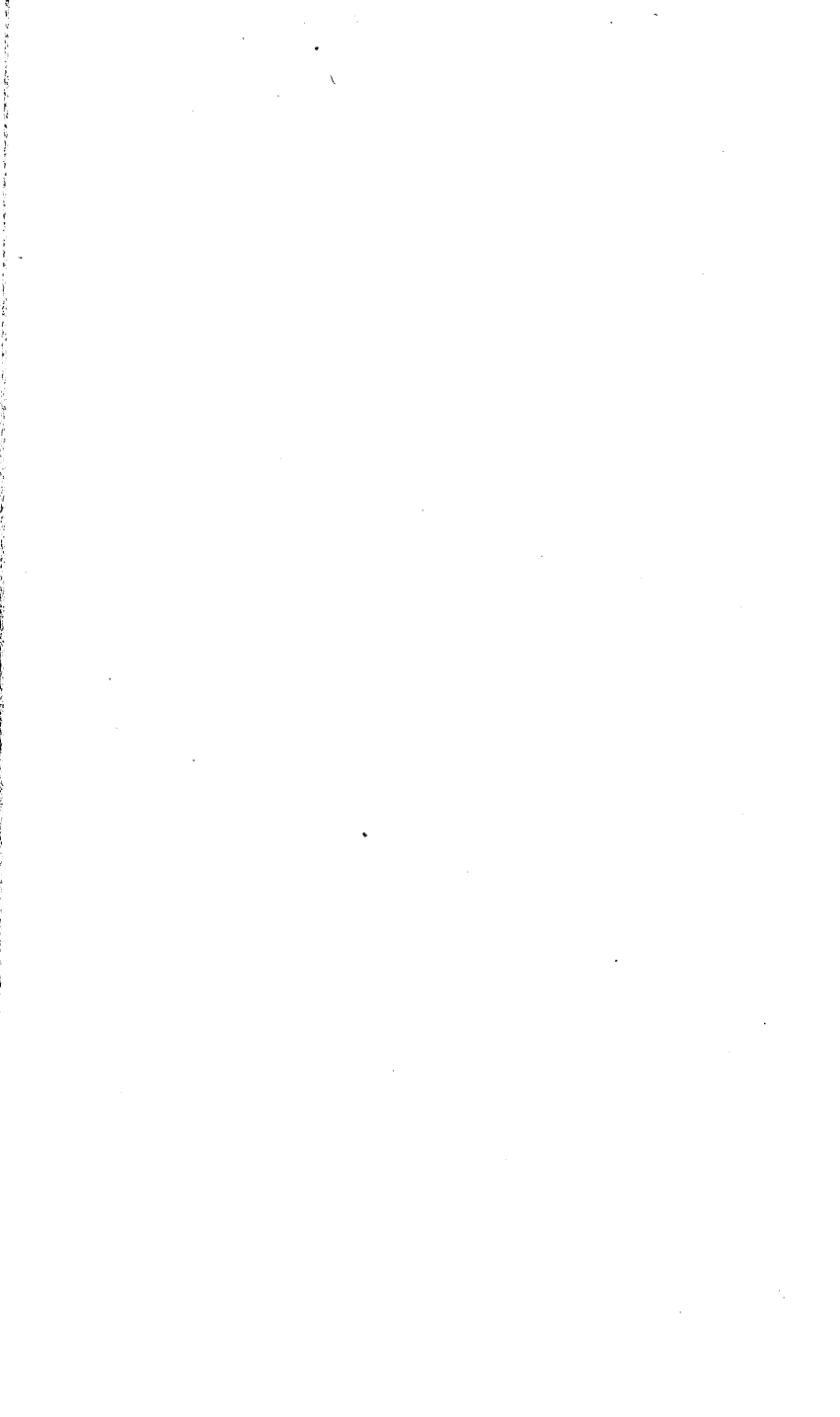
AND SOME OTHER MATTERS

SIR BERTRAM C. A. WINDLE

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BY SIR BERTRAM C. A. WINDLE

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Since my debt of gratitude to the late Henry Ignatius Dudley Ryder is one which can never be duly discharged, and since a number of the topics in this book were discussed with him in the days of former pleasant companionship, I wish to dedicate this book to his memory, and for that purpose have precluded the other discourses by a brief personal recollection of a man whose name has never, I think, reached that high position in Catholic estimation which it deserves to occupy.

TORONTO

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IN MEMORY OF HENRY IGNATIUS
DUDLEY RYDER, D.D.¹

THE question as to whether the advantages or disadvantages of being the able son of a very distinguished father are the greater seems to sound like the kind of thing which might form the subject of discussion of some tiresome debating society. It is not so, however, for there really is very good ground for hesitating before coming to a conclusion. Does the kind of start which the distinguished father can undoubtedly give to his son compensate for the manner in which his personality and that reputation which he has already gained are bound to overshadow, at least for a time, the growing reputation of the rising generation? To be the son of such a father presents, no doubt, solid enough advantages, but, like most other things in this imperfect world, it has the defect of its quality and carries with it equally solid disadvantages.

Father Ryder—everybody always called him Father Ryder even after the Pope had made him a Doctor of Divinity, though everybody struggled, to the Doctor's great embarrassment, to give him his proper title—Father Ryder, so it has often

¹ Born January 12, 1837; entered the Oratory of St Philip Neri at Edgbaston December 8, 1856; was ordained Priest February 28, 1863; and died October 7, 1907.

seemed to me, was somewhat in this position with regard to his spiritual father and predecessor in the provostship of the Birmingham Oratory, Cardinal Newman. That great man claimed and secured from his spiritual children even more than the respect and affection which is due to an ordinary parent, and, it may be added, he secured both of them in a measure by no means always vouchsafed even to the most deserving of ordinary parents. Added to this filial esteem there was the additional reverence, even awe, due to one who was not only possessed of one of the greatest intellects of his day, but was, if not the greatest, at least amongst the greatest masters who has ever handled the English language. When one remembers these things, it is not wonderful that those who grew up under his shadow should have felt themselves daunted, and feared to court comparison with his almost matchless literary style. However this may be, and I suggest that my hypothesis is worthy of consideration, there can be no question that the fame of Newman's successor as Superior of the Birmingham Oratory has never stood so high in the estimation of the general, I think not even of the reading public, as it ought to have done.

Here was a man of whom W. G. Ward—no mean judge on such a point—did not hesitate to speak (in 1881) as “by far the best theologian in England”; so the late Mr. Wilfrid Ward told us in the Essay which he published on Ryder in the *Dublin Review*, shortly after his death.

No one who reads that Essay will have the excuse that most people have for forgetting or

perhaps being ignorant of the fact that Ryder was a poet, and a genuine poet. Nor has anyone any excuse, since his Essays were collected and published by the filial labours of Father Bacchus of the Birmingham Oratory, for being unaware that he could and did prove his right to be regarded as a master of English and a man of thought not unfit to be spoken of in connection even with so great a man as his predecessor in the superiority of that Oratory.

I have recently reread, and not merely for the second time, these Essays, and with renewed admiration. The perusal has caused me to recall many of the incidents connected with a long and unusually close friendship and has filled me with the wish to set down some recollections of a man whose memory ought to be perpetually fragrant, at least amongst English Catholics, whom he loved and for whom he lived. In Mr. Ward's article quotation is made of one of Ryder's poems, which I may be allowed to reproduce here.

What flowers I had in one fair knot were bound,
And so I laid them on a public stall,
Wondering would anyone take note at all,
Or, taking note, to praise them would be found.
A keen-eyed critic turned the nosegay round,
Then cried, "No true flowers these!" and let it fall;
"They're weeds that grow against the church's wall!
And what coarse thread around the stalks is wound!"

'Tis true, I fear me, dandelions and grass
I culled, mistaking them for garden bloom,
And half-believing that they so might pass;
And now my critic has pronounced my doom,
Half-undeceived I shall not grudge my lot,
If friends may find one true Forget-me-not.

What I have to set down will be poor and inadequate enough no doubt, and, as it is almost entirely of a personal character, I must be forgiven if, in Thackeray's words, I assume "the simple upright perpendicular" letter "I" and intrude myself on the scene far more than I should desire. At least it will be a personal pleasure to me to lay this modest wreath on the grave of one for whom I had an unstinted affection, and I can promise that whatever flowers that wreath may contain, however trivial they may be, there shall at least be amongst them the Forget-me-not for which he asked.

Henry Ignatius Dudley Ryder (the Ignatius, as he used to observe, from the earlier saint of that name, not Loyola) was the son of George Ryder, once a clergyman in Anglican Orders. George Ryder married one of the four daughters of the Rev. J. Sargent, Rector of Lavington in Sussex, and a man of considerable personal means.

Lavington is a tiny place, not easily accessible, yet it has a greater connection with the later history of the Church of England than some cathedral cities can boast. It is so unimportant a place that there was not even a morning service held in the church on the Sunday morning on which, after hearing Mass at the beautiful church in Arundel, I made a pilgrimage to Lavington on my bicycle.

In the church itself hangs the pastoral staff of Samuel Wilberforce (irreverently known in his own day as "Soapy Sam"), Bishop of Oxford and afterwards of Winchester. Outside the church is his grave, and beside it are those of his wife and

of her sister "Caroline, wife of the Rev. H. E. Manning." There is a good deal of food for thought in the contemplation of those three graves. It is always interesting, even if unprofitable, to reflect upon "what might have been," and, in this case, no one can look at the three graves without speculating what might have been the effect upon the Catholic Church in England if the future Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster's wife had not been so early taken from him. The four Misses Sargent became Mrs. Henry Manning, Mrs. Samuel Wilberforce, Mrs. George Ryder, and Mrs. Henry Wilberforce respectively. Three of these husbands became Catholics, and though Samuel Wilberforce did not, a son and a daughter of his did. Lavington, then, is a name to be remembered in connection with the revival of Catholicity in England. But we must pass from these matters to the consideration of the subject of these recollections himself. In 1837, when the future Oratorian was born, his father was Rector of Easton, near Winchester, which, so Father Bacchus tells us, is the place described by Father Ryder, with so much affection, in his essay, *The Passion of the Past*.

He was not fated to enjoy this much-loved spot for long. In 1845 his father and mother, when journeying on the Continent on account of Mrs. Ryder's health, were received into the Church, and with them their son Henry. This step, of course, necessitated the father's resignation of his living. As a married man he could not become a priest, and he passed the rest of his life as a layman. I

never saw him, but I have often seen his grave at the Cistercian Abbey of Mount St. Bernard, Charnwood, Leicestershire. On his tombstone is a very noble prayer of resignation to the will of God, his own composition, and indulgenced, so Father Ryder once told me, by (I think) Pius IX.

This, however, is not a life, nor even a sketch of the life of Henry Ryder, but an attempt to record some personal recollections of the man; to bring out some salient features in his character and some characteristics of his writings, all too few as those writings were. And here I hardly know where to begin; perhaps, as in other things, it may be as well to begin at the beginning and to tell how I became acquainted with him by name long before I even met him, and how I fell into his debt for time and, as I firmly believe, for eternity. It was at the time that I was considering the grave step—the gravest that any man can take—of changing my religion, such as it was, and becoming a Catholic. After the first impetus in that direction, over which I need not delay, most of my Romeward path was trodden amongst books, and I had read myself at least on to the threshold of the Church before I ever spoke to a priest or even to another Catholic on the subject. Amongst the books put into my hands by those who, most justifiably from their own point of view, were anxious to deter me from taking the step which I was then contemplating, was Littledale's *Plain Reasons Against Joining the Church of Rome*. I read it with great care, and, after finishing it, the conclusion seemed to be that the Catholic Church was not

the place for any reasoning, not to say honest man. Whilst in this frame of mind I happened to see in the window of a bookshop a little volume with the title *Catholic Controversy: A Reply to Littledale's "Plain Reasons."* Ryder and Littledale were mere names to me at the time, but, with the idea of giving both sides fair play, I went into the shop and bought the book. Not long ago I looked it through again—it and Littledale's book, which stands beside it on my bookshelves. I do not suppose I had looked into either of them for more than thirty years. I see that they are carefully marked, and, indeed, I remember reading Ryder's book with extreme attention, and rising from it with the absolute conviction that either Ryder or Littledale—both, as I have said, mere names to me at the moment—was a liar. I am afraid that there seemed to be no other word for it. It seemed worth while to ascertain where truth lay, and it was not hard to do so. I remember marking some dozen passages where each author contradicted the other, and thus provided, I hunted up the references which I wanted in a great library, and, of course, speedily learnt which was the truthful witness. In a sort of way Littledale made a Catholic of me—a thing I am quite sure he never intended to do for any man. This by the way, and this personal incident is only brought in because it explains my first acquaintance with the name of Ryder, and enables me to say something about this particular book of his. It is now, I suppose, almost forgotten, like Littledale's. They have gone the way, or are going the way, of Pope and Maguire, which I

remember in my youth. It is inevitable, but, in a sense, it is a pity, for Ryder in his book achieved a real and most rare *tour de force*, since he answered his opponent in a book scarcely larger than that to which he was replying. No one in any way acquainted with controversial literature of any kind will deny that this was a very unusual thing. A fool can put more questions in five minutes than a wise man can answer in a year, and to reply to all Littledale's misrepresentations (perhaps worse) in the same compass as they occupied, was a task which few would have attempted and fewer still have accomplished.

No one could have done it but a man with an absolute mastery of his subject and of the English language, and an unerring judgement as to what to choose and what to reject. Point by point he takes up Littledale, and not merely answers, but positively pulverises him. It is a pity that Ryder's reputation should be so closely associated with a book which must needs be of little more than passing interest. Meantime, and before passing away from this subject, it may not be amiss to epitomise one argument in order to show the kind of thing which Ryder had to meet, and did meet, in dealing with this book. Littledale is arguing that the cultus of images was contrary to the teaching of the early Fathers, and he quotes a passage from St Augustine (*Enarr. in Ps. xcvi* 11) in which a pagan, disputing with a Christian on the subject of idols, says: "I do not worship a stone: I bow before what I see, and serve him whom I do not see." Then to the question "But who is he?"

the pagan replies, "Some invisible power which presides over that image"; and the saint goes on to say that by giving this explanation of their images they think themselves very clever, as not worshippers of idols. *Full-stop!* Full-stop is what Littledale set down there beyond the word "idols," and goes on to say that this passage clearly proves that St Augustine totally disapproved of the use of pious images. Very well; but let us turn up St Augustine's works, as Ryder advises, and what do we find? No full-stop, not even a humble comma where Littledale left off. St Augustine's words are "*quia non colunt idola* (at which point Littledale gives us his full-stop; but the saint proceeds) *sed colunt demonia.*" The argument is obvious: "My pagan friend, you can't get off by means of your argument about not worshipping the image, for you are impaled on the other horn of the dilemma, since if you worship what the image represents to you, you are a demon-worshipper." I do not think that this is an unfair example of the kind of misrepresentation of which Littledale was guilty and which Ryder had to meet. *Ex uno disce omnes!*

Perhaps, as I have been dealing with Ryder as a controversialist, it may be as well to finish this part of my subject. He was, as all who knew him would admit, a man of scrupulous fairness; one who never spared any pains to get at the exact facts in connection with any point on which he was at work. I remember the time when he was engaged in writing the article "On Certain Ecclesiastical Miracles" for *The Nineteenth Century*. It was a

reply to an attack by Dr. Abbott on some sayings of Cardinal Newman, then dead. By this time Father Ryder and I had become the close friends which we remained up to the time of his death, and he appealed to me for medical light upon a particular point, which was that of the sixty African Catholics whose tongues were cut out by Hunneric, an Arian king, yet who were able to speak perfectly after this terrible experience. I could not give him the information, but we went together to a medical library and there spent an afternoon in hunting up authorities. The result of our explorations, as summed up in the article (republished amongst the Essays already alluded to), occupies no more than some dozen lines. Scarce worth the trouble they cost! So some might say, but the instance will show the meticulous care which he took to be accurate. While I am on this question, I will add this interesting note, that a distinguished surgical friend some years ago told me that he had removed the entire tongue from a National School mistress in Ireland, who, on recovery from the results of the operation, was able to resume teaching, and continued for some years in that occupation. In his controversial writings, as elsewhere, Ryder had a good deal of the Newman touch, especially in his lambent humour, a humour which, when he chose that it should do so, could scorch. Everybody has read Newman's *Present Position of Catholics*, and everyone, therefore, knows the delightful passages in which the Cardinal's humour plays round the imaginary picture of Catholics summoned up by

the opponents of our religion. Far fewer know the humour of Ryder, different in character, but no whit inferior in quality. Newman dealt with the lion as pictured by the man; this is how Ryder dealt with the picture of the Catholic and the Anglican bodies in England in the past as certain Anglican writers paint it. The passage is from *The Pope and the Anglican Archbishops*, one of the republished Essays. "Our" (the Catholic) "sole representatives in pre-Elizabethan history written up to date are, unfortunately, just those whom we could best afford to dispense with—the leaders, to wit, of the fierce Papist reaction under Mary, who kindled the fires of Smithfield and threw away a noble opportunity. Here we are distinctly wanted, and we appear upon the stage for the first time to burn a few blasphemers of the Mass—not Anglicans certainly, neither are Anglicans as yet anywhere distinctly visible. In the next reign we appear again, and a goodly number of us are disembowelled at the hands of very emphatic Protestants, Anglicanism the while "mewing its mighty youth" in the safety of some "green retreat," and leaving such rough companions to fight it out for themselves. An invisible Church, heir at once to the memories of the past and the hopes of the future, I see her slowly materialising beneath the royal smile, a kneeling figure conscious of having chosen the better part, whilst Papists and Protestants busy themselves in various ways, mainly at each other's throats."

But he could be severe towards the same baseless pretensions, when those who made them were

guilty of false accusations against the Catholic Church. In the essay *Ritualism, Romanism, etc.*, which is an answer to Dr. Littledale—and since they are both dead it may be said that Ryder had a most sovereign contempt for that very unscrupulous writer—he replies to certain wholly unwarranted accusations against the Church. “Truly a most repulsive picture,” he writes, “to which we hardly know where to find a parallel, unless it be in the Ritualist conception of the Church of England in the sixteenth century, firmly holding the integral Catholic faith, whilst coquetting with every fiercest devastator of God’s vineyard which those unhappy times produced; tenderly preserving her belief in the Mass and confession and the Madonna, whilst cheerfully assisting in the person of her ministers, for the most part of the second order, at the infliction of protracted torments upon Mass-priest after Mass-priest (against the most of whom no charge could with any plausibility lie, except that they said Mass and strove to preserve or restore the Catholic faith in the hearts of their countrymen); and instead of whispering the consolations of a common faith, assailing the martyr’s defenceless ears with studiously articulated blasphemy.”

The sovereign contempt for this adversary of which I spoke just now makes itself evident in the following passage, the last which I shall here quote from the volume of Essays. Littledale, unable to deny the fact that a considerable number of converts annually joined the Catholic Church, sought to belittle them on the ground, it may be supposed,

that it was the Archbishop of Canterbury rather than the Pope who "threw his weeds over his wall." Further, he endeavoured to show that such converts sink into coldness and indifference, which, by the way, is exactly the opposite of what others have charged them with. As examples, he urged that one convert had become a "house-decorator," which is certainly neither a criminal nor an immoral occupation, and, if a descent in the social scale for conscience sake, highly honourable. Another, we are told, had become "a low-comedy reciter and author," again a harmless occupation; but when one learns that the person in question was Arthur Sketchley, whose "Mrs. Brown" books, now forgotten, were the delight of mankind when I was a boy, one feels that the description was as thoroughly disingenuous as so much of Littledale's writing was. The third person whom he cited had become, according to his account, "a billiard-room loafer." Of him Ryder writes—and anyone who knew him can hear the contemptuous tones of his voice when they read his words: "As to the billiard-room loafer and Dr. Littledale's other acquaintance, who got drunk and assaulted the police, I abandon them regretfully, feeling sure, from the mere fact of their appearance in the excellent company of Dr. Littledale's black list, that there must be a world to say on their behalf."

One last word about these Essays, which are far less known than they deserve to be. The Essay on Cardinal Newman and Cardinal Manning is, to my mind, the most illuminating thing that has ever been written, perhaps ever will be written, on that

most vexed topic, the relations of the two Cardinals, and contains at its close, in connection with the character of Manning, as fine a piece of literature as can be found between the covers of any of the works of the greatest masters of the English language. Ryder was not, as he confessed, greatly enamoured of the methods of his uncle the Cardinal Archbishop, but that did not prevent him from recognising the extraordinary qualities possessed by that remarkable man. It was one of the topics which we very frequently discussed together, for, to pass to personal matters, I should say that for a great length of time—in fact, until I left Edgbaston—it was his habit every Sunday afternoon during term-time to spend a couple of hours with me. Sitting in a large armchair and assiduously smoking his pipe—he had a most healthy love of tobacco—we used to “travel over one another’s minds.” In this kind of conversation he was at his best, for he did not shine, whether from shyness, reserve, or indifference I cannot say, in general company, in which his face, so animated when really interested, usually wore a sad expression, as of one suffering in silence—but suffering. But when he knew and liked his company he could and did talk as but few whom I have met could talk. I often compared him in my own mind with Dr. Johnson, though in many ways—personal appearance, for example—the two men were poles apart. They were both ardent Tories; I think Ryder was one of the most convinced, even inspissated, Tories that I ever met, and I rejoice to think that, though my views on many points were most divergent, on this as on

some other matters—Manning, for example—that fact never interfered with our friendship nor lessened our mutual affection. He never “shouted down” an opponent, nor did he “toss and gore” him, but the tone of his conversation was very suggestive of the great lexicographer. He had, for example, a habit of repolishing a phrase which was very Johnsonian. “Talking of the comedy of *The Rehearsal*, he said: ‘It has not wit enough to keep it sweet.’ This was easy; he therefore caught himself, and pronounced a more round sentence: ‘It has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction.’” I have no special instance in my recollection, but this passage about Johnson might quite well have been written about Ryder. He loved a “round sentence.” He loved epigrams and apt comparisons, and both quoted and made them. One which I have often heard him use was, I am told, originally Blessed Thomas More’s: “I marvel at the courage of those who undertake matrimony. It is like putting your hand into a bag of adders to extract the one eel which it contains.”¹ Another great favourite was, “There never yet was a sermon from which I did not learn something, if it was only patience.” I do not know the author of this, though George Herbert has something very like it. It is a thought which does occasionally rise in one’s mind. May I revert to the *Essays* for a few further instances? Of the late Provost Salmon and some writings of his

¹ It is also to be found in Mr. Anstey’s *Brass Bottle*, and, as Ryder greatly admired that author’s *Vice Versa*, the work in question may have been his source for this apothegm.

against the Catholic Church : "The Professor has written a telling article which clings and stings like a jelly-fish and is as difficult to lay hold of." Of those who, "whenever they throw a stone at a window of the Catholic Church, hint to Fr. Newman with a bow and a grimace that they know he rather likes it than otherwise," generally protesting their deep admiration for him while pouring abuse on everything for which he stood : "It is touching and yet it is absurd. It is to their credit that they should like Fr. Newman, as it is that they should like the first five centuries; but their claim upon one and upon the other is about equal." Those who knew him well will hear the very tones of his voice when they read these words, for he was prolific in good sayings, quite impromptu. Of a certain good man who had been put into an educational position for which Ryder thought him to be unfit, it was said that he had "done much spade work." "I knew," said Ryder, "that a spade was an agricultural implement, but I did not know that it was an instrument of intellectual culture." In connection with another appointment of which he did not wholly approve, he remarked that the man appointed was too much like a machine. It was urged *per contra* that those with whom the gentleman was associated were much attached to him—in fact, "clustered like flies around him." "Flies, I think," he meditatively remarked, "may like the oil on machines." He was an immense reader, and delighted in good novels. We have had many a tussle over the more difficult passages in the novels of George Meredith, of which we were both

students. Sometimes he would walk into my study absolutely bursting with some recent literary discovery, and I may give one instance of this, as it is so characteristic of the man. He had no sooner settled himself one Sunday afternoon than he burst out on the subject of the French chroniclers Villehardouin and de Joinville, not then so easy to make one's own as they have been since they have appeared in the Everyman Library. I was obliged to confess that I was unfamiliar with them. Then he commenced to quote from the book a number of passages which had engaged his admiration, and particularly one—which, as it is but little known, I shall quote—which he declared to be amongst the finest things that he had ever read, and no man had a keener or more unerring scent for really fine literature. Let the passage, as it stands and not as he paraphrased it, be taken as an example of the kind of thing which appealed to his mind. The narrative deals with a certain theologian who confessed, with bitter tears, to William, Bishop of Paris, that he could not in his heart feel for the blessed Sacrament “like as Holy Church teaches,” yet knew well that this was a temptation of the enemy. The bishop asked him whether the temptation gave him any pleasure, to which the theologian replied that it troubled him more than aught else; and to a further question he replied that he would rather be torn limb from limb than say anything against this Holy Sacrament. Then comes the passage so much admired by Ryder. “‘Now I will tell you something more,’ said the bishop; ‘you know that the King of France is at war with the King of

England, and you know, too, that the castle that lies most exposed in the borderland between the two is the castle of la Rochelle in Poitou. Now I will ask you a question: If the king had set you to guard la Rochelle, which is in the dangerous borderland, and had set me to guard the castle of Montlhéri, where the land is at peace, to whom, think you, would the king owe most at the end of the war—to you who had guarded the castle of la Rochelle without loss, or to me who had guarded the castle of Montlhéri without loss?’ ‘In God’s name, sir,’ said the master, ‘to me who guarded la Rochelle without losing it.’ ‘Master,’ said the bishop, ‘my heart is like the castle of Montlhéri; for I have neither temptation nor doubt as to the Sacrament of the Altar. For which thing I tell you that for the grace that God owes me because I hold this firmly and in peace, he owes you fourfold, because you have guarded your heart in the war of tribulation and have such goodwill towards him that for no earthly good, nor for any harm done to the body, would you relinquish that faith. Therefore, I tell you, be of good comfort, for in this your state is better pleasing to our Lord than mine.’”

Besides literature he had a very great love of art in all its aspects and, what hardly anyone would have suspected who did not know him well, a really deep knowledge of ceramics, a matter in which I had some smattering of knowledge and on which we used to hold much converse. Glass and water-colours were other objects on which he had much knowledge, and one of his pleasures, when

out for a walk, was to turn into a second-hand shop and indulge in a long talk with the proprietor on the wares which he had for sale.

In his always pathetically untidy room at the Oratory he had a few—a very few—bits of china and glass which he used to gaze upon with the greatest internal satisfaction. It was wholly characteristic of him that over and above all the other beautiful pictures in that splendid collection in the Birmingham Art Gallery; in preference to the David Cox water-colours and the unrivalled series of pre-Raphaelite pictures got together by the skill of Sir Whitworth Wallis; over and beyond all these he set his affections on a picture of Morland's—unquestionably a masterpiece—representing some pigs lying in a straw-yard, if I remember right, but certainly some pigs. As to this picture, and the pigs particularly, he would love to talk, especially devoting his attention to the psychology of pigs in general and this special group of pigs in particular. There is real humour in this picture, and it did not appeal to him in vain. But no one can read his account of himself as a prison chaplain—the last kind of position in which one can imagine him, yet one to which I am sure he bent all his powers—without seeing that he possessed a very keen sense of humour. It is a curious thing that his love of the beautiful survived after almost everything else had disappeared. During the last two or three years of his life I did not see him at all, for I had left England to return to Ireland, from which I had been absent for twenty-three years, but the illness which rendered

his last few years so tragic took place before I left. We were together at a beautiful country house then rented by a hospitable friend, equally dear to both of us, and now long since dead. I was sitting with him out of doors, and by way of trying to distract his thoughts began to tell him about a matter of Catholic educational politics which would, before his illness, have attracted his most vivid interest. I noticed that his attention was only languid, and shortly he remarked: "How lovely the sunlight is on the back of that cow!" It was quite true, but it was desperately tragic; his work was done, and at no time, to my knowledge, did he ever recover his old grip of things.

He was one of the handsomest men I ever saw, and I believe that he was not only perfectly unconscious of that fact, but would have issued the major excommunication against anyone—if one so bold there lived—who would have hinted that he was anything but a very ordinary mortal in appearance. In this connection there rises to my mind one of Ryder's favourite stories, which I have heard him tell more than once and always with great gusto. It was told to him, so he used to say, by a friend who was on one occasion walking along the esplanade at some southern watering-place. In front of him and walking in the same direction as he were three Catholic clergymen. One of these was the late—but not then Cardinal—Vaughan. No one would deny that he was a handsome man. The second was his brother, then Archbishop of Sydney, whom I never saw, but who was, I believe, also a singularly personable man. The third I do

not name, since he is still alive, and, though I have not seen him for at least twenty years, I am sure he retains that striking appearance which he then possessed. A couple—lady and gentleman—passed first the three clerics, then Ryder's friend. As they passed the latter, he heard the lady exclaim: "What remarkably handsome men those three Catholic priests are!" He also caught the reply: "My dear, that is part of their system!" It must be confessed that the system sometimes breaks down, but most certainly it did not in the case of Father Ryder.

One other characteristic I should not have thought it necessary to touch upon but for the fact that a dignitary of the Established Church, whose natural modesty must be constantly receiving painful shocks from the persistent position in the lime-light which he seems obliged to take up, has recently been assuring an audience in the United States—though why these particular deliverances were prepared for export, rather than for home consumption, is not clear—that it is impossible for a Catholic priest to be a gentleman. "The Catholic priest, *quâ* Catholic priest, is not a gentleman." And, since his whole nature should be absorbed in his priestly character if he is a real priest, it follows that he cannot be a gentleman at all. Shades of Vaughan, Manning, and Newman—to mention but a few, and to omit the living—can this writer know anything about Catholic priests? About gentlemen, of course, as the self-appointed exponent of that order, it must be assumed that he knows all that can be known. Even Newman, we

are informed, lost his rank as a gentleman when he became a Catholic priest. If we could see things as Dean Inge sees them—but no other living person of whom we are aware—we should see that, in spite of the unanimous judgement of the world, Kingsley was successful in the great combat which gave to the world that masterpiece the *Apologia*. This at least may be said, that no person could have spent one half-hour in the company of Fr. Ryder and subsequently—at least, supposing him to be moderately addicted to the truth—penned such a statement as that quoted above—a statement which, whether intentionally or not, is a gross and direct insult to an entire class of men deserving of every respect, and receiving it from their lay fellow-countrymen, some of whom, always humanly speaking, may be almost as good judges of what constitutes a gentleman as the learned person who is so dogmatic on this as on so many other subjects. With sincere regrets that he never had the chance of correcting his judgement by conversing with Fr. Ryder, or, it would seem, with any of his brother-priests, let us leave this writer to his limitations and pass on.

This is not the place, nor is there any intention on my part, to speak of Fr. Ryder in his priestly capacity. I could not adequately, if I would, tell what he was to me, and, I doubt not, to many another, in hours of deep trouble, nor can I do more than register my gratitude to him for the advice and assistance which he gave me during the many years that he was my confessor. These are not matters to be discussed in an article such as

this, but even here it may be set down that beyond all other things and always Fr. Ryder was a priest, and, though no person could suggest or ever did suggest that that fact was obtruded, no person could ever forget the priestly character of the man with whom he was in company. I think I may mention one incident in connection with his priestly duties which he related to me on at least two occasions with great care, and the facts of which are clearly before my mind at this moment.

He was at one time Chaplain to the Children's Hospital at Birmingham, and, visiting there one day, was shown a little Catholic child perfectly unconscious and in a dying condition. She was suffering from one of the most terrible and fatal diseases of childhood, noma of the cheek. Perforation had occurred, and every medical man will know what might be expected under those circumstances. It was a tiny child; there was nothing to do for it, in the profound state of coma in which it was obviously passing out of the world, but to say a prayer for its happy release. This he was doing, when he put his hand in his coat pocket and remembered that he had there, in a leather case, a relic of St Philip Neri, which he had taken to some sick parishioner who had expressed a wish to be blessed with it. Without, as he himself admitted, any particular idea of seeking for a cure; acting, as he also said, on a sudden impulse; unseen, as he supposed, by anyone, he took the reliquary from his pocket, touched the child's cheek with it, put the box back in his coat, and left the hospital. It so happened that nothing called him again to it for a

fortnight. When he entered the ward in which the dying child had been, he said to the nurse who was in charge: "When did that poor little child die?" Her reply startled him: "There is the child," pointing to a convalescent baby playing on the hearthrug. "Do you mean to tell me that it didn't die?" "No; it began to get well from the moment that you touched it with that box you had in your hand." I asked him whether he thought such an occurrence—which to a medical man was sufficiently remarkable—could be classed as a miracle. He was the most cautious of men, and quite the last to claim more for an occurrence than was warranted, and he in no way made claim to such a distinction for this event.

Nor, I need hardly say, do I, for it is certainly possible, though most unusual, for a case of noma to get well by natural means, even in the advanced condition which this had reached. Still, no one will deny that the occurrence was remarkable and the grace of recovery a very special one, and there we may leave it.

There, too, I must leave my subject—not that I have exhausted it or done that justice to it which I could have desired to have seen done. The flowers which I have plucked in his memory have been of the ordinary or wayside character, and if I have abstained from plucking the Forget-me-not, as I promised to do, it is because I desire it to remain always with me *in memoriam perpetuam tam cari capitis*.

SOME PLAIN FACTS ABOUT MIRACLES
OF HEALING

I CAN carry back my recollection to a time when opinion outside the Catholic Church was very different in respect to modern miracles from that which obtains to-day. More than half a century ago, when I was a boy and being brought up in the straitest circles of Irish Evangelical Protestantism—and how strait those circles were can in some measure be estimated by reading *Father and Son*, a picture of that kind of life, though it relates in no way to Ireland—no one with whom I came in contact would ever have held, or ever did hold, any other idea about such things but that they were priestly frauds. It was the morning after the controversies of Pope and Maguire, now happily forgotten; a day when Tresham Dames Gregg and other redoubtable champions of Protestantism strutted and vapoured; a day when, as I can well remember, one was handed, or picked up, or read on the walls bills commencing “Dear R.C. Friends! Do you not know that your priests are deceiving you when they teach you——” and then would follow a list of the more important dogmas of the Church, usually commencing with the Blessed Sacrament, as to which statements horrible, if they had not been ludicrous, in their ignorance were made. Thank God that day has passed. There are lewd

fellows of the baser sort who still exploit Maria Monk and her like, and utter their rank discourses to those who will listen to them. But even their day is passing. Indifferentism? Well, no doubt in part that explains it, but so far as the question of miracles is concerned not entirely; not even more than partially. What has brought about this change can be summed up in one word—Lourdes. Lourdes is a fact which cannot be got over; it has to be explained, and of course there have been explanations more than one attempted, of which brief mention will be made in this essay. I have been there and visited the *Bureau des Constata-tions*. I saw nothing in the way of a miraculous cure. But while I was there there was no great pilgrimage of sick people, though I had the opportunity of witnessing one of exuberantly vigorous Basques—a most inspiring sight. But there is the Bureau, and there are the resident doctors, and there are the records—and no slipshod records, either, for at least as much care is bestowed upon them as is required for its clinical records by a first-class hospital. Further, any medical man of any or no religion is welcomed at the Bureau, and can overhaul the patients, cured or uncured, to his heart's content. And last and most important of all, sick people do get cured there: of that fact there can be no possible doubt. All of which things naturally invite an explanation, and certainly do not find one in the old theory of priestly fraud stored up in the memories of my youth. Of course, as everybody knows, there are any number of accounts of Lourdes, but if I were asked to

indicate a brief description which would appeal to the non-Catholic, I think I would ask him to turn to Letter XVII in that very interesting and thought-producing book *The Corner of Harley Street*, which, under the cover of a pseudonym, is known to be the work of a physician on the staff of one of the largest London hospitals. Not a Catholic himself, and obviously with no particular leanings towards our faith, he equally obviously has visited Lourdes, whether in charge of a pilgrimage, as he suggests, or not is no matter, and though he tells us that he saw nothing there which could not be explained by suggestion—that blessed word which we are to deal with more fully before we part company—he is quite clear that of conscious fraud there is no observable trace. He does not think quite as highly of the *Bureau des Constatations* as I do; but then, he had not at that time had the opportunity of seeing Dr. le Bec's careful work, and, further, he is doubtless thinking of the vast resources of clinical and pathological laboratories now available in large hospitals and impossible, even if advisable, at Lourdes. What I do insist on is that the Bureau there requires clinical data of complete character before expressing any opinion as to a case, and is at least as sceptical as any group of ordinary fair-minded non-Catholic doctors of medicine could be.

I have no intention here of devoting any space to the general questions relating to miracles. There are plenty of books in which the views of theologians on the subject can be studied, and in which the objections which have been raised from various

points of view are considered and dealt with.¹ What I want to discuss here is a simple question—viz., Is there sufficient evidence that things happen at Lourdes or elsewhere which cannot be explained in terms of medical or biological science, and, if so, is it at all likely that though there is no explanation to-day one may yet be forthcoming which will not entail the hypothesis of miracle? I shall try to discuss this in such a manner as to be comprehensible to those who know nothing of medicine. It is not necessary to know anything of it to understand quite clearly the few facts which I intend to set forth. First of all, what is a miracle in precise language? “*Opus sensible, insolitum, divinitus factum, supernaturale.*” So the theologians. It is the “*sensible*” and “*insolitum*” that I am concerned with. If the case for them can be made out, it must be left to others to discover, if they can, any alternative to “*divinitus factum*” and “*supernaturale.*”

Obvious to the senses and unusual—that is our line of investigation, and, if I commence with a well-worn case, it is just because it is so well-worn and so very fully tested. Lying on the table of the *Bureau des Constatations* when I visited it were casts in metal of the two bones of the left leg of a man. I said to the doctors, “Pierre de Rudder,” for I recognised them at once from the pictures which I had seen, and, in fact, they were the casts of the bones of that very interesting and remark-

¹ I know no better modern book than *Introduction à l'Etude du Merveilleux et du Miracle*, par Joseph de Tonquedec. Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1916.

able case. It is nearly twenty years ago now since the editor of one of our Catholic reviews sent me a copy of the pamphlet describing this case, which was published in 1906 by the Catholic Truth Society of Scotland, a translation of the work of Fr. Alfred Deschamps, who besides being a Jesuit Father is a Doctor of Medicine and a Doctor of Science. With the pamphlet came a note asking me to see whether it was possible to pick a hole in the case from the medical point of view. I did my best, but failed, and since that time, having in the interval read at least a dozen treatises on the same case, I have still been unable to find any ordinary explanation of occurrences which I propose to deal with sufficiently thoroughly to make them understandable to the ordinary reader.

Pierre de Rudder was an inhabitant of a village called Jabbeke, between Bruges and Ostend. In 1867, being then aged forty-four, his left leg was broken below the knee by the fall of a tree. The fracture was what is known as "compound"—that is to say, the tissues covering the bones were torn so that the broken ends were exposed to the influences of the air and its contained bacteria. It should be noted that at the date in question antiseptics were unknown, and fractures of the kind indicated were much more serious affairs than they are to-day. A doctor was called in, and the fracture was set and dressed. In those pre-antiseptic days, the danger of such a condition was that suppuration would set in, a flow of "matter" take place, and the ends of the bones fail to reunite. This was precisely what happened in this case, and

after some months, during which the limb had gone from bad to worse, a consultation of medical men decided that the only thing to do was to amputate and remove the damaged part, so that the patient might ultimately get about on a wooden leg. No one can doubt that this advice was sound, and I admit that if I had been one of the doctors I should have felt extremely annoyed at de Rudder's obstinacy in refusing to submit to what, in the circumstances, was the obvious and only hope of a cure. However, he refused, and for a year lay in bed, seen infrequently by the doctors, who had very naturally abandoned all hope of a cure, and dressing his wound himself with water and linen cloths—a process which, while it very imperfectly kept him clean, allowed the process of decay to proceed unchecked in the ends of the two bones which had been broken. So matters continued until 1875, when he was seen towards the middle of January by two doctors, who again told him that an amputation was his only hope, only to meet again with a refusal. It is little wonder that after this time they left him to rely on his own ministrations, for there was absolutely nothing more that they could do until the time came when, worn out by the results of the constant drain from the wound, general manifestations must occur preliminary to complete failure of health and inevitable death. We now arrive at the month of April, 1875, rather more than two months since he had been seen by his doctors. On that day, and again on April 4, and still again on the sixth of the same month, he was visited by friends who, with the morbid

curiosity so common amongst peasants (and indeed not only amongst peasants), desired to see, and did see, the gruesome details of his condition. The friend who enjoyed this spectacle on April 2 testified that the left leg "was broken between the foot and the knee—so badly broken, indeed, that the sufferer could without the slightest difficulty bring the toes round to the back without changing the position of the knee; and when he bent the leg at the place of the wound, one could see in the wound the ends of the broken bones." Those who saw him on the sixth of the month testified immediately after the cure, like the last witness, that on the day mentioned they saw "the broken leg of de Rudder; the ends of the fragments of bone were piercing through the skin, and were separated from each other by a wound about three centimetres in length."

I have insisted on these details because of two "explanations" of the occurrence which have been made public. The first is fatuous in the highest degree, and runs to the effect that, since no medical man had seen the leg for some three months, there was no evidence that it was still in a fractured condition. It may be admitted that no one but a medical man could have given an opinion as to how a cure might be attempted, but to say that no one but a doctor could be capable of diagnosing a fracture in conditions such as those just mentioned, is to make an absurd statement, as absurd, as some writer has put it, as to say that no one but a tailor is capable of deciding whether there is a hole in a pair of trousers or not. So much for that ridicu-

lous "explanation." There follows on it another, disposed of similarly, that de Rudder's leg had long been healed, and that he shammed illness in order to "fake" a miracle at Oostacker. This explanation is worthy of the days of Pope and Maguire, and is disposed of effectually by an incident among those now to be narrated. There was at that time at Oostacker, near Ghent, a shrine which had been set up by some pious person in imitation of that at Lourdes, and dedicated to our Lady under that ascription. It became a place of pilgrimage, and to this spot de Rudder and his wife repaired on April 7, 1875, it being then eight years and two months since the bones of the leg were broken. It was a painful journey, partly walked, partly in a train, and partly in a diligence.

While waiting for the train the condition of his leg was noticed by a friend, who thought him very foolish to go to Oostacker, and told him so; by two acquaintances who travelled in the train with him, and observed the foul condition of his bandages; and finally by the conductor of the diligence, who, not unnaturally, made a considerable fuss when he discovered that blood and matter had poured out of the wound on to the floor of his conveyance. Here, again, these details are insisted upon because, unless every person in the entourage of de Rudder was a facile and finished liar "with circumstance," there is an absolute refutation of the "explanations" mentioned above.

This brings us to the little shrine, and there de Rudder sat down on a bench and took a drink of water. Finally, feeling strong enough to move on

his crutches, he hobbles round the grotto, and again sinks on to the bench to rest, when suddenly—note the *suddenly*—he feels that his leg is cured, and rises up without his crutches, passes through the files of persons around the grotto, and kneels down to make thanksgiving for his cure.

On his way home one of the first persons whom he encountered was the man who had advised him not to bother his head about Oostacker, but to save his money, and the astonishment of this doubting friend at what he saw can easily be imagined.

The doctor who had attended him off and on for more than eight years at first absolutely refused to believe that any cure had taken place or could possibly take place. However, a visit convinced him; and, what is a matter of some moment, he was himself so impressed by this cure that from complete infidelity he was converted to a living faith. It would seem that his medical mind, at any rate, was convinced of what had happened, and, after all, his was the medical mind which had been most closely brought into contact with this particular case. De Rudder lived twenty-three years after his cure, finally succumbing to pneumonia at the age of seventy-five. After his death the bones were removed from his legs, and if they did not perish during the war, as we may suppose that the shrine of Oostacker must probably have done, they are still to be seen. Now we can sum up the salient facts of this case as follows:

1. The man had both bones of his leg broken at the age of forty-four, and let it be noted that the

age is an important factor, for union is readier and more rapid in the youthful.

2. The bones refused to unite under medical treatment, and remained ununited for more than eight years. There is enough weight of evidence on this point, if transmuted into another direction, to hang the three most respected members of the present Cabinet for murder.

3. The bones suddenly reunited at Oostacker and remained soundly knit for twenty-three years. The same remark applies to this.

4. The post-mortem condition shows that the bones had been broken and reunited, and here a remark may be made. Why—if miracle it was—did that miracle not continue to the point of reconstructing the bones just as they were before the accident, and not with every obvious evidence that there had been a fracture? It is not for us, perhaps, to offer an explanation; but this is quite clear—that if the “mend” had been as perfect as suggested, it is absolutely certain that there would not have been wanting those who would have declared that there never had been an accident at all. That way of escape is completely barred: the bones had been broken and they had been united. Even a pathological tyro can see that without difficulty or doubt.

Such being the facts of the case as testified to by a cloud of witnesses and described in a variety of works, let us now turn our attention to its medical aspect:¹

¹ Of a multitude of books on the topic with which I am concerned, besides that mentioned above, I can recommend

1. What is the normal method of cure of a broken bone? In the days of de Rudder, as we have seen, antiseptics were unknown. They were only beginning to creep in when I was a medical student in the later seventies. Still less were X rays known, though one sapient and disbelieving medical man has based his disbelief in the case on the fact that no radiograph of de Rudder's leg was taken. He might as well have suggested that a motor-car would have been a more commodious method of transit from Jabbeke to Oostacker than the painful process actually and of necessity adopted.

And for that reason a compound fracture was far less likely to unite than it would be to-day. But a simple fracture or, in those days with great luck, even a compound one, unites in this way: A soft mass of tissue called callus surrounds the ends of the bones and unites them, it being supposed that by the adjustment of the surgeon they have been brought into proper line.

Into this soft mass pass salts of lime, which after some time reunite the broken fragments, whereupon the soft callus disappears in so far as it has not been worked up, and the bones are as good as ever, though always presenting indications, obvious to the surgeon, that they have been broken.

Twenty Cures at Lourdes, by Dr. de Grandmaison (Eng. trans., Bèvenot and Izard. Sands.); and *Preuves Médicales du Miracle*, par Dr. le Bec (Paris: Tardy-Pigelet et Fils) (Translation, *Medical Proof of the Miraculous*, Izard and Ware. New York: P. J. Kenedy and Son).

Further, if union has occurred at once there ought not necessarily to be any shortening of the limb.

2. Supposing that this union does not take place, what is likely to happen? Here we may leave aside the simple fracture, over which there is no need to delay. In the case of the compound, what happens is just what happened in de Rudder's case. The ends of the bones die, and gradually the gap between the upper and lower fragments becomes larger and larger by the loss of bone substance. Meantime formation of matter is constantly going on, and hence there is a copious discharge from the open wound. Further, from disuse all the muscles of the limb are degenerating and decreasing in size, and the general condition of the sufferer becomes worse and worse from the constant drain on his system from the suppuration.

3. What could have been done in de Rudder's case and at the time in question? Nothing, I should say, but amputate. That is what the surgeons advised and the patient refused. They could not expect the dead ends of two bones to unite, for that is a thing unknown to surgical science. There is the possibility that, if the dead ends were sawn off and the fragments thus "freshened," union might take place, but in an old compound fracture this was so unlikely that the surgeons seem never to have even contemplated such an operation. Had it been attempted and been successful, it is quite certain that there would have been considerable shortening of the limb.

4. What actually happened? Here we approach

a most interesting point, for, in order that the bones may unite, there must be supplied a certain amount of phosphate of lime to build up the solid substance of which they consist. Further, as, during more than eight years of suppuration, there had been a considerable loss of bone, if there was to be no shortening, as in fact there was not, quite a considerable amount of that substance must have been required. It is derived ultimately, of course, from the food, and circulates, but in small quantity, in the blood. Chemists have calculated that normally there is in the blood about one and a half grammes—*i.e.*, something over twenty grains. In case of a fracture, this can only be supplied at a certain rate by the capillaries, or minute bloodvessels which supply the callus, so that about forty to fifty days or more are required for the complete consolidation, even in favourable cases, of such bones as these when broken. Dr. le Bec calculates that the amount of phosphate of lime which would have been required to fill up the gap so that there might be no shortening cannot have been less than five grammes—*i.e.*, about four times as much as is ever available at any one time in a free state.

5. Let us sum up the remarkable features in this case:

(a) There was an instantaneous cure. This is a matter of prime importance in almost every one of the Lourdes cases. Let us concede—*per impossibile*—that after eight years' suppuration the bones might suddenly get to work and reconsolidate. No one has ever heard of such a case, but let us imagine one. It is wholly impossible to imagine such a

thing happening in the twinkling of an eye, as was the case here.

(b) The muscles were at once restored to their perfect condition. This is not a point which perhaps appeals to the non-professional reader like the first, but common sense will tell us, if experience has not revealed the fact, that muscles which had not been used, and could not have been used, for over eight years, must necessarily have been flabby and almost useless. Yet from the moment of the cure de Rudder could, and did, run and dance in his exultation.

(c) There was no shortening. Suppose that the extraordinary slow natural cure, which, against all experience, we have ventured to imagine above, had taken place, there would inevitably have been a considerable shortening of the limb. But, in fact, there was not.

(d) And this because there was suddenly found an amount of the necessary material to fill the gap, an amount altogether in excess of that which normally exists in any human being in a free state and therefore available. Perhaps someone will explain where this came from, and how it was suddenly deposited exactly where it was wanted.

It has already been mentioned that it has been attempted to explain away this occurrence by postulating wholesale lying on the part of a countryside, for that is what it amounts to, and including a doctor of experience whose convictions (or lack of them) were so upset by what passed under his eyes that he abandoned disbelief and returned to a profession of the Catholic faith. To ask one

to believe this tale of lying is to ask an absurdity; almost as great an absurdity as that of the sapient German physician who, at a Medical Congress in 1902, argued that "the case of the cure of Peter de Rudder cannot be true, since it would be a blow in the face given to all the laws of biology and pathology." So, as it could not happen, it did not happen. But it did.

I do not remember that anyone has offered the great "suggestion" hypothesis in this case; indeed, it would hardly be possible, with a grave face, to imagine that "suggestion" could suddenly and effectually deposit four times as much lime salts as normally exist in an available condition in just the place where they were wanted and in the required shape. We may dismiss this hypothesis as well as the others, though we have not yet done with suggestion. And what is left?

I leave it to any candid reader to say, for, personally, I can offer no kind of ordinary explanation, nor has any other writer been successful in that task. So much for this very important case.

I now propose to take up one other, also in some detail, because it presents several very interesting features, and is by no means so well known as that which has just been dealt with. It is fully described by Dr. le Bec, who was, in fact, the medical attendant of the patient in question.

This was a priest, aged fifty-one years, who had suffered from varicose veins of the leg for sixteen years, and at the time of the events to be narrated was in a very advanced condition of that distressing malady. Besides the knotted snake-like masses of

veins, no doubt familiar to many, he suffered from the severe form of ulceration met with in this disease. His condition was so bad that it seemed impossible for him to continue to perform any duties—in fact, it was clear that he must soon resign himself to the condition of a complete invalid. Before visiting Lourdes, this priest called on Dr. le Bec, who made a complete examination and notes of the case. He said that he was going to Lourdes without the slightest hope or expectation of a cure, but solely because his Archbishop had ordered him to do so. In that hopeless frame of mind he repaired to Lourdes and entered the bath; at once felt that excruciating agony of pain which so many have experienced at the moment of cure; and recognised that his dilated veins and the ulcerations had entirely disappeared. A few days afterwards he again visited Dr. de Bec, who testifies to his complete cure. And seven years later he again visited the doctor, still in complete health and able to discharge, as he had been discharging for those years, all the duties of an arduous appointment.

Here there can be no quarrel as to the facts nor as to adequate medical testimony. What are the remarkable features of the case?

A few lines of elementary physiological teaching for the sake of the ignorant, if any such open this book. The blood is pumped round the body from the heart, passing first through the arteries and then through very minute tubes called capillaries into the veins. It must be obvious to anyone that as the fluid passes through the tiny capillaries there

must needs be considerable loss of pressure, so that the blood enters the veins without full impetus. It has to get back to the heart; and from the feet and lower limbs has an uphill journey for much of the day, especially when we are standing or walking. Moreover, whilst the arteries are mainly deep down amongst the muscles and receiving some support from them, many of the veins, as we can see by looking at the backs of our own hands, are very superficial, and that is the case with those veins of the leg and thigh which become affected in the disease which we are discussing. In order to help the blood in its task, the veins are supplied with valves in their interior.

These are shaped like little pockets looking upwards towards the heart, so as to prevent a return of the blood backwards. Now, in the disease with which we are concerned the veins become enormously dilated and the valves entirely disappear. A secondary result of the clogging of the blood-flow is the development of most intractable ulcers which aggravate the miseries of the unfortunate sufferer.

1. Could surgery have effected a cure? The condition being what it was, I should say that it could not. There is an operation for the cure of varicose veins which consists in the removal of parts of the offending vessels, ligation, and so on. But I think I am right in saying that no such operation would be at all possible in the advanced stage of the disease which this patient had reached. At any rate, there is no reason why, in view of his sceptical attitude towards Lourdes, he should have said that

he was going there when, in fact, he was going to a hospital to be operated on. Finally, there is this clinching argument: Supposing against all possibility that he had been operated on and completely cured, it is beyond any kind of possibility that this could have taken place during the interval which existed between the two visits to Dr. le Bec.

2. What happened? Several very remarkable things. First of all, the veins returned to their normal size and position. Secondly, the valves were restored after having completely disappeared. Of course, no one could look into the veins and see them in place, but from the condition of the circulation after the cure there could be no doubt that the valves had reappeared. Thirdly, the ulcers—usually most intractable—had disappeared.

3. Could this have taken place normally? I should feel greatly surprised if anyone could point to a case of spontaneous cure of this disease at such an advanced stage without scars or other marks of the former ailment. And what I think one may safely say is that for such a cure to occur in an instant of time is surgically unthinkable.

Suggestion? It would be a bold man who would claim that suggestion could effect a cure of this kind, and an instantaneous one; and, further, let us bear in mind that the priest went under obedience and perhaps a little annoyed at having to take such a long and tedious journey, to no purpose as he imagined. Such is not the sort of person whose psychological condition warrants the notion of suggestion.

The time has now come when this question of

suggestion must be met at close quarters, and, to begin with, let us admit that it can do very many things, and that very many cures which, in the past, would have seemed miraculous, can thus be explained. Of course, a very large number of these would necessarily be of an obviously—or, if not obviously, yet latently—nervous origin. In this connection it is interesting to note, and will perhaps be a surprise to some to learn, that Pope Benedict XIV, in his directions as to “The Beatification of the Servants of God” so long ago as 1747, laid it down that cures which could be in any way associated with the action of the nervous system were not to be relied on in cases of canonisation. Thus ecclesiastical teaching long anticipated that of the medical profession. We may dismiss all this huge group of cases from our mind. Further, we may admit that even in grave conditions suggestion is of great importance. What, after all, is “the good bedside manner” which one often hears of in connection with medical practitioners but a special form of suggestion? In very many cases it is just the suggestion which enables the patient, who may be almost moribund, to make the effort which will bring him back to life. Mrs. Dombey, we may remind ourselves, would not make the effort—bearing in mind what we know of Mr. Dombey, perhaps she was right—and a fatal result followed. Let me quote a case from a very interesting little book by an old pupil and assistant of my own.¹

¹ *Suggestion and Common Sense*, by R. Allan Bennett, M.D. John Wright, 1922.

The patient was a Bushman from a village in Nigeria, and had been treated in the Native Hospital at Old Calabar for double pneumonia, from which he was recovering and ought to have made a good and speedy recovery, yet obviously was doing just the contrary, apparently because he would not "make an effort." In despair Dr. Bennett sent for the medicine-man of the tribe, who arrived when the patient was to all intents and purposes moribund. The witch-doctor lit his fire; burnt his incense; carried out the ritual of his craft. The genuine doctor kept his finger on the pulse of the patient for an hour, during which time it improved from a mere flicker to a steady beat. Before the day was over the patient was on the high-road to recovery, and did actually recover completely, and the witch-doctor had departed after refusing to take any fee. A sufficiently wonderful case, but one that could be paralleled from medical practice over and over again. Wonderful, but in no way miraculous in the sense we are employing. Give suggestion every chance; it cannot explain a very considerable number of the cases on record. Nor can its advocates explain why, as Mr. Belloc puts it, "if what happens at Lourdes is the result of self-suggestion, men cannot, though exceptionally yet in sufficient numbers, suggest themselves into health in Pimlico or the Isle of Man? It is no answer," he proceeds, "to say that here and there such marvels are to be found. The point is that men go to Lourdes in every frame of mind and are in an astonishing number cured."¹

¹ Preface to *Lourdes*, by J. Jorgensen.

That is just it; "in every frame of mind"—the afflicted priest with no expectation, yet with an inward belief that miracles did happen, and that one *might* occur in his case. But in other cases with much less mental foundation to work on. Such was the case of the railway employee Gargam, who, having been badly injured in some accident, was declared by a body of medical men to have sustained a perfectly incurable condition of the spine, for which he was awarded a life pension by the company whose servant he had been. He was not even a believer in religion, but was taken to Lourdes by his womankind, and there incontinently and completely cured. What happened to the pension, history, so far as I am aware, does not relate, but there is the full medical evidence as to his incurability, and the full evidence that he was cured, and evidently without the slightest expectation that anything of the kind would occur.

One last case, where age prevents any idea of suggestion. The patient was the child of a Catholic medical man, and was born with congenital club-feet—a troublesome condition for which operation was attempted at the age of fifteen months by a specialist, who performed a tenotomy—that is, the division of the tendon of a muscle involved in the deformity. No good result followed, nor was the use of apparatus—often employed in these cases—any more successful.

The doctor, accompanied by his wife, took the child to Lourdes. After the third bath there was a complete cure, and with this remarkable concurrent fact: the muscles were completely supplied

with full capacities as in de Rudder's case. Here, however, were muscles which had never been properly used from birth, which none the less functioned perfectly from the moment that the bones were restored to a normal condition.

Here, perhaps, it may be well to note another point of almost equal importance with the suddenness and permanence of the cures—there is no convalescence. Ordinarily we know from experience in ourselves or in those near and dear to us what a slow thing convalescence is. The patient gets up for a bit and lies on a sofa or is advanced to an arm-chair in the sun; walks a few steps in the garden, and so on. But after a cure at Lourdes there seems to be nothing of this kind. Immediate and complete restoration to full and perfect health is the rule, and a very singular additional fact this is.

But to return to the case: the point here to be noted is that the agency of suggestion—even if one can imagine a cure of such a character by suggestion, which personally I cannot—could not have come into operation in the case of a child of less than two years of age, which could not have in any way appreciated what was going on.

It is time to bring these remarks to a close, but before doing so one may note the fact that every precaution has been taken to ascertain that it is no special character of the waters at Lourdes which can be an explanation of what happens there. They present to the eye and the taste no special characteristics, and chemical analysis confirms the fact that they have none, being ordinary pure drinking-water. Further investigations show that they

are not radio-active. No explanation is forthcoming from that source, nor is there any explanation of the fact that though people go to Lourdes with all kinds of diseases and bathe in the waters, which are not renewed after each bath, there has never been an epidemic there nor any suspicion of communication of disease, and that, in fact, the death-rate of the inhabitants of the place is quite surprisingly low. Let us note one last point in connection with these cures—they are very infrequent amongst the rich.

From what has been said, it follows as, I think, an indisputable conclusion that, giving "suggestion" every possible, almost every impossible case, there yet remain quite a number of others which can neither be explained by it nor by any other medical formula. Either these cases do not happen, in which case one must abandon all reliance on human testimony; or they happen and are inexplicable. Nor does it help us to say that further advances of science may explain them, for, if such were the case, those advances would, as a preliminary, have had to abolish most of what we already know of biology and pathology, as the sceptical German doctor very clearly saw. Any idea of that kind leads us up to a palpable absurdity and may be dismissed. There is no use in trying to look for an explanation down that corridor.

SCIENTIFIC REPUTATIONS

A PLEA FOR ORDINARY ACCURACY IN CATHOLIC MATTERS

YEAR by year, as books for review pass through my hands, I find myself asking time and again the following question and unable to obtain any satisfactory answer: "Why is it that serious mistakes in a published book bring discredit upon its author in every case but one, and that the case of the oldest and largest body of Christians in the world?" Or, to put it in another way: "Why is it that a writer who, lest he should be tripped up in a mistake, will go to any amount of trouble to get at the truth concerning some scientific triviality—comparatively speaking—will not so far incommode himself as to walk, say, half a mile to the nearest Catholic presbytery to ascertain what really is the teaching of the Church on some important point?" No doubt one reason is that the cynical writer is perfectly well aware that the majority of his readers will themselves be wholly ignorant of the matter, and hence there is no danger of his being tripped up by them; and that, as for the small minority—Catholic or not—who see his mistakes—well, what does it matter? No one—and there he is almost right—will think any the less of him for a mistake in this field of knowledge. It is a very curious situation, and, before I seek to

ascertain the reasons for it, let me give a few instances of what I mean.

I will commence with mistakes which are not intended to injure, and as a matter of fact do not injure, our religion, but which are none the less mistakes. Some years ago I was reviewing a work on Marriage Customs, which, I may at once say, betrayed no kind of anti-Catholic bias. Yet in it we were told, first, that every priest takes a new Christian name on his ordination; and, secondly, in connection with one of the Roman methods of marriage—*confarreatio*, to wit—where the bride and bridegroom partook of food together, that the essential feature of the Catholic marriage ceremony was the partaking together by the contracting parties of the Blessed Sacrament. Now, here are two mistakes, neither of which could be alleged to cast any discredit on our beliefs. If every priest, instead of merely certain members of religious Orders, did really take a new name on ordination, it would require a severe stretch of enmity to translate that action into a detestable form of idolatry or even a dark type of ignorance. And, if the view put forward respecting our marriage ceremony was correct, it would certainly be impossible to think of it as otherwise than a noble and even exalted idea. But it happens that neither of these things is true, and the latter is about as far from the truth as anything can be. The writer of the book would, I am sure, have gone to immense pains rather than make a mistake as to the doings of a witch-doctor in Kikuyu or the matrimonial conceptions of the Arunta in Central Australia, knowing

full well that if he went wrong over these important points, he would have the whole pack of the Royal Anthropological Institute baying at his heels. Yet, though he could have ascertained the truth by a short walk or for an expenditure (at that happy day) of one penny for a stamp, it did not seem worth his while to take the trouble, and his book goes to the world with these errors, and nobody is a penny the worse, and the watchdogs of Anthropology never stir a hair. Why? Well, because a mistake in connection with Catholic matters does not really bring discredit upon its maker.

I will pass now to more serious mistakes intended to depreciate the Church, and there are plenty of them to choose from. I will content myself with a few examples, and these by no means from the lower stratum of controversy, where one looks for lies and gets them.

I may begin by reminding readers that Huxley, who thought he knew a good deal about the Church, but in reality knew as little as could well be, once said that one of the reasons why he so much rejoiced in the Evolution Theory was that it was in flat contradiction to all the teachings of that ancient seat of ignorance and contempt of learning, the Catholic Church. It was not quite a scientific way of looking at Evolution, but let that pass.

What is really important is that Huxley was completely wrong, being blankly ignorant. Mivart, who knew what he was writing about, put the real facts of the case as regards the teaching of the Church in his *Genesis of Species*. Was Huxley pleased? Did he say, "Well, the old lady is not

so purblind as I supposed, and I am glad to know the facts"? That is what would have happened in any other case, but not here. Huxley's next move was to try, very ineffectually, to show that Mivart did not know what he was writing about; that he—Huxley—knew what the Church taught, if no one else did. One need not revive the echoes of that old controversy. Everybody now knows that Mivart was right, and the most bigoted have no excuse for ignorance since Canon Dorlodot's excellent little book appeared in an English dress. But it is a good example of the ignorant statement made, because the author did not know—and, in this case, would not know—the truth respecting the matter.

However, let us pass to another point, and consider a recent work of immense size, for it fills two large volumes, of many pages in length, and in the *Search for the Soul*, of which it purports to be in quest, refers, as a separate index shows, to some sixteen hundred authors. Prodigious! and the most prodigious thing about it is the fact that, amidst such a gallant display of erudition, the author should have fallen into some of the gross and ignorant mistakes which it contains. Here, for example, is a really choice flower culled from this extensive garden:

"For three centuries Christianity was a religion without a ritual or a priesthood, or temples, or altars, or public worship."

It may fairly be claimed that a more complete collection of utter absurdities and inaccuracies never was before or ever again will be assembled in so

many words. "*For three centuries*"—mark those words!—there was no ritual; yet as a matter of fact the Canon of the Mass, as we have it to-day, was, if not actually Apostolic, quite certainly immediately post-Apostolic, almost to the most minute details. And it would be hard to find a better example of ritual. There were no priests; what about the episcopal order which unquestionably existed? Were there bishops and no priests? There were no temples; well, that depends upon your definition. In the sense of St Peter's or Westminster Cathedral, there were not; but that is not what the author means, for he goes on to tell us that there were "no altars," and thus reveals the lamentable fact that he has never heard of such a place as the Catacombs. There was "no public worship"; there, again, in a sense there was not, for Christianity was under a ban and hidden in private houses. But, again, that is not what he means, for he proceeds to tell us that "every Christian communicated direct with God from his innermost heart." It is to be hoped that every Christian continues to practise private prayer, for without it he would cease to be a Christian; but if the writer means, as he obviously does, that there was no gathering together of the faithful for worship as public as the perils of the time permitted, he exhibits to a world, which, if it ever read his book, would be amazed, the fact that he has never read a work known as "*The Acts of the Apostles*," and that, if he has ever tackled any of the Epistles, he has sedulously skipped or wholly ignored the little familiar bits which occur at the end of more

than one of them. Let us suppose that this writer—or any other—had committed himself to the statement that when Columbus discovered America he found the inhabitants chiefly occupied in their leisure moments in carrying out buggy races with trotting-horses, the whole world would cry out—at least that part of it which became acquainted with his views: “But there were neither horses nor wheeled vehicles in America in pre-Columbian times!” Yet the blunder in the latter case would certainly not be greater than that in the former.

In works of this kind there is one collection of falsehoods which always is to be found, and that, of course, is the popular tale as to Galileo. And in the work with which we are now concerned we find the ancient lie flourishing in full vigour:

“He [Galileo] died in 1642, the prisoner of the Inquisition. He was not allowed to make a will, and he was denied the right of burial in consecrated ground.”

Let us, for the sake of any readers who may not have the facts clearly before them, analyse this collection of alleged facts. Galileo is dead, and he died in 1642: that we must allow to be accurate. “They will fly into it sometimes,” as the loader remarked to the unskilful shot who had at last brought down a bird. The prisoner of the Inquisition: under some kind of mild supervision by that body perhaps. But the statement made by our author certainly seems to point to a dark dungeon where a rat or a spider was the prisoner’s sole solace. The hard fact is that he lived in his own villa at Arcetri, to all intents and purposes as

free as any of us are. I do not know whether he did or did not make a will or desire to make a will, but, from what I see of the author's inaccuracies, I should fully expect to find that he did make one, and that it was probated, or whatever happens to such things, in Italy in due course. As to the final statement concerning his burial, the facts are that he received not only all the Sacraments of the Church but the blessing *in articulo mortis* of Pope Urban VIII, the reigning Pontiff, and was buried in his own parish church of Santa Croce. Now, here are bald facts easily discoverable by anyone who takes the trouble to look up an encyclopædia, yet writers like this are willing to go on making the same old untruthful statements, and because they relate to Catholic matters no one cares in the least. Suppose that this "eminent psychologist"—for so I have seen him described in reviews where not a word was said about these or other mistakes—had written down the statement:

"Henry VIII of England was the model of conjugal fidelity. He was always true to his one and only wife, and after her death he was never seen to smile again."

Would this perversion of historical truth have been any more glaring than that which has just been quoted?

At the risk of becoming tedious, one more instance must be quoted, for it is recent, the book having been published in 1923. It is doubly serious because that book is of set purpose intended to assist those in religious difficulties over scientific theories, and because its author is a dis-

tinguished professor in the University of Kansas, and his book is published under the authority of no less an institution than the University of Princeton. For all these reasons one would have imagined that the author, for the sake of his own reputation and those of the two Universities in question, would have taken all necessary trouble to avoid mistakes, and we may feel sure that in the case of so important a thing as the life-history of an Infusorian, he would have done so. But in the case of that considerable organism the Church of God, it does not matter what one writes or says—no one will bother his head about the matter. Otherwise, how is one to account for the following list of statements, which may be checked against the facts named above?

1. "Copernicus' book was condemned as heretical and utterly contrary to the Scriptures." This is a half-truth. The full story is given lower down (p. 62).

2. "The discoveries of Galileo put it [the heliocentric theory] on a sound foundation." As a matter of scientific fact this time they did not. The matter was one of surmise until the day of Bradley, a century later.

3. "He is said to have muttered to himself as he left the presence of the judge, 'But the earth does move just the same.'" It is only said by the ignorant, for all the world knows that this phrase was invented for him one hundred years after he had gone to his rest.

4. "He was thrown into prison, treated with all the severity which his remorseless persecutors

could devise, for the remaining ten years of his life." A fine example of the lie with circumstance.

5. "After his death the punishment was prolonged for ever by denying him burial in consecrated ground." Another of the same type.

Is it not positively amazing that any man who can read an encyclopædia should allow a work to go to the world with such errors in it?

No doubt many persons borrow these lies from that granary and storehouse of such things, *The Conflict between Religion and Science*, by John William Draper, M.D., and it is because a new edition of this book has recently been brought out that this article is written, and a protest made against the letting loose on an innocent public of a flood of misstatements, known and shown to be such a thousand times. And, further, to protest against a hoary edifice of calumnies such as this coming before the public, as it does, as a new work, for there is not a word on the title-page or cover to show that it first saw the light fifty years or more ago.

Dr. Draper was born at St Helens, near Liverpool, in 1811; emigrated to the United States; was a Professor of Chemistry there; and died in 1882, passing to a place where, for the first time, he discovered what he had evidently never suspected whilst on earth—namely, that there were things of which he was ignorant. As a matter of fact, this book appeared in 1874, and has gone on poisoning people's minds ever since. As far as Catholics are concerned, it has, I believe, long been on the Index, and no more proper exercise of the

power of that Congregation can well be imagined. How many thousands of non-Catholics (and doubtless of Catholics too, ignorant of its position on the Index) have read and believed the statements of this book, it would be hard to say. They would have been far more numerous but that its dulness would deter very many; and it must be admitted that, unlike some of its controversial congeners, it makes no pornographic appeal. One curious thing about this edition, apart from the fact that it is issued by two reputable houses—one in London and the other in New York—and in a series which has been adorned with works by some of the most eminent dead and living authors, is that no name of an editor is attached. Perhaps it had no editor; yet that seems almost incredible in the case of a book written more than fifty years ago and dealing in part with scientific subjects whose complexion changes from year to year. If editor there was, he had, when confronted with his task, several alternatives before him. He might, for example, have issued his book with some such foreword—the fashionable term to-day—as this: “This is a curious and historically interesting example of the customs and criticisms of a bygone day which cannot but be valuable to students of archæology, and, as it is republished in their interests, it has been reprinted with all its burden of inaccuracies on its shoulders.” Or he might have appended a series of notes, pointing out the errors and their necessary corrections, though to be sure this would have meant a pretty big book. Or he might have omitted the mistakes, which would have left quite

a small one. Or he might have endeavoured to re-write the passages which were out of date or inaccurate, but such a piece of patchwork would have been a parlous task in the case of a fabric whose warp is prejudice and whose woof is ignorance.

None of these expedients has been adopted, and it is to be regretted, for surely no competent editor would have allowed a number of the statements to pass without some comment. For example, to select one from many instances, he would not have omitted to warn his readers, when allowing a long quotation to appear from a work on Human Physiology published in 1856 (!), that, though the pen that wrote that work was the pen of Dr. Draper, physiology is a science which has made huge strides in seventy years, and no part of it huger strides than that which the quotation refers to—namely, the physiology of the nervous system.

The author of the book seems to have felt at variance with almost every form of religion and with most leaders of these forms, though he makes no secret that his heart is with the heresiarchs of all kinds, and the more heretical the better. He would like to love Luther, “a sturdy German monk,” but Luther said some uncivil things about science, as he was apt to do about anything which did not follow his *sic jubeo*. Of course, the true villain of the piece is the Catholic Church, to which the author, like others of his kidney, pays the real but quite unintentional compliment of seeing that it is the one religious organisation which knows its own mind; which has a clear idea of its own

commission; which is not afraid to lay down principles, and which never swerves from them when once they have been laid down.

Again, in true conformity to type, he is ready to embrace anyone, however heretical, even non-Christian, Mohammed for example, whose "form of God was perhaps more awful than that of paganised Christianity," by which flower of speech he indicates the Church of Christ. And this, although a line lower down he is constrained to tell us that the Mohammedan heaven is a "palace of Oriental carnal delight"; "filled with black-eyed concubines and servants" who, it would appear, are not in any way incompatible with the awfulness of the deity whose heaven they adorn.

Averroes is one of the objects of his admiration, and he is quite ruffled because the Lateran and Vatican Councils anathematised his teachings, which, he comforts himself by stating, are "still held to be true by a majority of the human race." Here, we take it that the author is alluding to pantheism, in which, as we well know, all false philosophies, including the Draperian variety, end. But we note that his admiration for Averroes has not led him to mention some of the less admirable teachings of that philosopher, such as that there can be two kinds of truth, scientific and philosophical, an enormity which we have recently seen saddled upon Scholastic philosophers, who would have protested vigorously, as they did indignantly protest against it, when its Arabian formulator brought it before the learned world.

Nestorius, again, was a man much to be admired,

and his opponent, St Cyril, was everything that was bad. "This was that Cyril who had murdered Hypatia." Let us pause a moment over this statement. When a writer is attacking an institution, especially one so venerable, so beloved by, and so great a consolation to its adherents as the Catholic Church; especially when he is essaying to prove that institution to be built upon a foundation of lies and nurtured and sustained by falsehood and infamy—and such is the charitable thesis Dr. Draper worked upon—surely we may ask that he himself shall be irreproachable in his historical facts; accurate in his scientific assertions and fully informed of the technicalities of the institution he sets out to criticise and, if he can, demolish. On this platform we propose to examine his work, and we think we can show that, from all these points of view, it is wholly unworthy of a moment's consideration by any serious student.

The task entails a tedious and disjointed collection of instances—selection, perhaps one might say, for many are left behind reluctantly for want of space. Let us attack the task and commence with the quotation we have just given. Cyril murdered Hypatia. History, unfortunately for Dr. Draper, is quite definite as to the name of the murderer of this misused woman; it was Peter, the Lector or Reader, as Dr. Draper calls him. "No doubt," we suppose he would reply, "but Peter was merely Cyril's tool." Socrates, the historian, who is our informant as to these occurrences, generally considered to be a very impartial writer, did not take this view, for he makes no kind of

mention of St Cyril in connection with it. Further, let us remember that by the regulations of the African Church a Lector was not a cleric and, therefore, was not under St Cyril's control. Let us take another historical case.

Dr. Draper tells us that Pelagius—a heresiarch and, therefore, no doubt one of the best of men—was condemned as a heretic by Pope Innocent I, and that “his successor, Zosimus, annulled his judgement, and declared the opinions of Pelagius to be orthodox.” On this follows the usual fling at Papal infallibility, a subject the A B C of which, as we shall show, the author had never grasped. But as to the history? Well, it is a fine example of that peculiarly dangerous form of lie which is half the truth. Briefly: Innocent did condemn Cælestius and Pelagius *and* what he understood to be their opinions. They appealed to Rome, where Zosimus by this time was reigning Pontiff. He did not withdraw or annul his predecessor's condemnation of the *opinions*. What he did was to ask that it should be made plain to him that the condemned opinions were actually held by Pelagius. The heresiarch made statements which led the Pope to think that he had been misjudged, and he was restored to communion. The African Church, better informed than the Pope, protested. Zosimus ordered a further inquiry on this point, which was held by the Council of Carthage, Pelagius' final condemnation following in due course.

Bruno was condemned to death, “the special charge against him being that he had taught the

plurality of worlds." We do not condone the burning of Bruno, but as a matter of historical fact the propositions for which he really was condemned were that our Saviour was not God, but a particularly skilful and successful magician; that the Holy Spirit was the soul of the world; that the devil would be saved and such other statements, after reading which we cannot wonder that a Protestant writer should exclaim that, eminent man though Bruno was, "he had not a trace of religion." Of course, Dr. Draper deals with Copernicus and with Galileo, and his account of both of them simply bristles with errors. We have only space to notice two, both glaring in their character.

Copernicus' book was condemned, he tells us. So it was, but an historian of average fairness would have also told us, as Draper does not, that the condemnation of this writer was due to the Galileo episode, since it took place long after Copernicus' death, and would also have recorded the fact that, after nine passages in which heliocentrism had been asserted *as a fact*¹ had been altered, the condemnation was removed.

Of course, we get the Galileo episode with all its embellishments and in terms so similar to those quoted a short distance above that one is tempted to believe that what is there set down was a mere quotation from the *Conflict*.

The name of Draper does not appear amongst the sixteen hundred authorities mentioned in con-

¹ It was not a *proved* fact until many years after Galileo's death.

nection with the *Search for the Soul*, but there is most suspicious likeness between the two collections of historical inaccuracies, and there can be no question that the writer of the *Conflict* is largely responsible for the dissemination and perpetuation of these distortions of the truth amidst the ignorant masses of the people.

There is another fine old crusted fable which reappears from time to time, also traceable to the ingenious Draper, which may be quoted here because in the more ignorant type of anti-Catholic literature it still flourishes:

"When Halley's comet came in 1456, so tremendous was its apparition that it was necessary for the Pope himself to interfere. He exorcised and expelled it from the skies. It shrank away into the abysses of space, terrified by the maledictions of Callixtus III, and did not venture back for seventy-five years."

At a later part of the book there is more of this nonsense about ringing of bells, public prayers, a victory over the comet by the Pope, and other details added no doubt to embellish a bald and unconvincing narrative. Now for the facts of the case. There was a visit from Halley's comet in 1456. Well? That's all. Not one other word is true. The *Catholic Encyclopædia* tells us how the thing arose:

"The fable was started by Laplace, who invented the 'conjuration,' though he tried to atone for his untruthfulness by omitting the phrase in the fourth edition of his *Essai philosophique*. The atheist Arago changed the conjuration into excommunica-

tion. Vice-Admiral Smyth added the exorcism, Robert Grant the anathema, Flammarion the 'malefice,' and finally John Draper the malediction. Here the vocabulary came to an end."

What, surely it is fair to ask, is to be said of the person who comes forward bearing in his hands a collection of pure inventions like this as the champion of scientific and historical truth? What is to be said of the man who tells his uninstructed readers that St Peter "doubtfully" died at Rome, and that the Diocletian persecution was caused by "a mutiny," when the real fact is that it was a refusal on the part of certain Christian soldiers to sacrifice to pagan deities. In a sense possibly a "mutiny," but here the half-truth is worse than the whole lie.

During his lifetime Dr. Draper had some measure of local scientific reputation. Those, if any, who are interested in its preservation, certainly did not do well to reissue his work with all its myriad mistakes. Some at least were the errors of his day, but that is just one of our complaints. The book is wholly unrevised, yet issued as if it were a perfectly up-to-date publication. One example alone shall be selected:

"It is difficult to assign a shorter date for the last glaciation of Europe than a quarter of a million years."

Difficult or not, recent observations of de Geers on the laminated clays of Stockholm seem definitely to establish the fact that it is just about nine thousand years since the ice left the spot where the University of that city now stands. There is some little discrepancy as to the date in North

America based on calculations made in connection with the Falls at Niagara, which are post-glacial in their character. But the most extreme estimate is some twenty odd thousand years, and the least no more than seven thousand. "Dr. Draper is dead, and could not know these things." I know that very well, but what about the persons responsible for presenting this bag of misstatements once more to the public without any revision? And that without any indication, except in an obscure place, that the book was not one of modern composition or containing the results of modern investigations.

But then, as the reader may very properly remark, there are so many errors that a few more or less can hardly matter. One more point in this connection. The author argues that the statements of Genesis and the findings of science cannot be in any way reconciled, and that the more we study them the more divergent we find them. Now, Canon Dorlodot has recently been lecturing all and sundry upon the failure of the concordists and the danger of relying on this method of what is often called "reconciliation," and there is much in what he says. Yet, on the other hand, there are quite remarkable points which cannot be slurred over. Remarkable enough to cause the late Mr. Romanes, while still an agnostic, to declare in the pages of that well-known journal *Nature* that "the order in which the flora and fauna are said, by the Mosaic account, to have appeared upon the earth corresponds with that which the theory of evolution requires and the evidence of geology proves"; and to induce Ampère (whose name is embalmed in an

electrical unit) to exclaim: "Either Moses was inspired or he knew as much about science as we do to-day."

Painfully conscious that our examination of this work is more and more approximating to the schoolmaster's list of schoolboy "howlers" which we see from time to time in the columns of the press, we must now turn to the author's mistakes as to the institution he is criticising.

And first for two elementary blunders which would not be made by a Catholic child aged ten. "Immaculate conception" is confused with a divine procreation, so common a myth in Pagan story. It is hard to credit that an educated man could make such a mistake, but there it is for all to read and wonder at. "Infallibility which implies omniscience" ought to have informed the Pope as to how the Franco-Prussian War would terminate! Can a greater depth of ignorance ever be plumbed?

Let us explore this region of knowledge, or ignorance, a little further. "No one did more than [St Augustine] to bring science and religion into antagonism." Yet, curiously enough, no one is more quoted to-day than that self-same Saint when it is desired to show that the teachings of the Church in no way conflict with those of science when both are properly formulated.

We are told that the globular form of the earth was denied by the Church (and it is a matter of fact that many early Churchmen and others were ignorant of its sphericity), and the contrary had been so firmly held that the Popes—who had apparently infallibly proclaimed its flatness, though we are not

told where or when—were very grievously embarrassed when the contrary was discovered to be the case, and especially after the voyage of Vasco da Gama in 1498. It is more than a little difficult to see how all this tallies with the unquestioned fact that Blessed (please note the Blessed!) Albertus Magnus had, *in the thirteenth century*, brought forward a number of the proofs of the earth's sphericity which are commonplaces to-day. We think Dr. Draper must have got muddled (an easy thing for a not very clear-sighted student of history) over the story of St Virgilius (Fergil or O'Farrell), Bishop of Salzburg, an early Irish wanderer, and St Boniface. The matter is too long to be dealt with here, but it in no way bears the construction which we suppose Dr. Draper to have placed upon it.¹

Our author's statements as to the attitude of the Church to the question of Evolution, and especially as to Providence and Natural Law (over which he makes very heavy weather), cannot be dealt with, though they afford excellent examples of the complete absence of grasp of his subject of which we complain.

Nor can we afford time or space to deal as faithfully with him as we should have liked over the

¹ It would interest Dr. Draper, if alive, to learn that in his adopted country "in the city of Zion (Illinois) the school children are compelled by theological authority" (not, we may feel quite sure, Catholic) "to learn that the earth is flat like a pie, surrounded by a circle of water, enclosed by an outer circle of impenetrable ice" (*Evolution and Christian Faith*, by Professor Lane, Princeton University Press, 1923, p. 201).

well-worn topic of the Spanish Inquisition, wherein we have rehearsed for us once more all the old stories and exaggerations. The Spanish Inquisition, we freely admit, was not an organisation to be commended. It went even beyond the worst examples of its period—a period, let it be remembered, when both Catholics and Protestants considered the stake as the proper treatment for heretics. We cannot think that de Maistre's thesis that it was a purely civil institution can be sustained, but this is quite certain—that it hung far more loosely from the Papal control than most things of its kind, and that Popes, notably Sixtus IV, spoke their minds very strongly as to its excesses. Dr. Draper characteristically tells us that over ten thousand persons were actually burned under Torquemada. A recent Protestant investigator, Peschel, makes it two thousand—bad enough, but not up to the Draperian standard.

Let us now turn to another series of extraordinary perversions of history. We are told that (apparently some date in the fifteenth century is alluded to) "the Papal government established two institutions: (1) The Inquisition; (2) auricular confession—the latter as a means of detection, the former as a tribunal for punishment." And, that there may be no sort of mistake as to the allegation, elsewhere the confessional is described as a tribunal which makes "the wife and daughters and servants of the suspected, spies and informers against him." Again, we are told that the necessity for confession was formally established by the Lateran Council, and that "at the end of the thirteenth century a

new kingdom was discovered, capable of yielding immense revenues. This was Purgatory."

Now, what are we to think of all these statements? Purgatory was discovered in the thirteenth century. Yet St Ambrose and St Augustine both discussed this topic; Tertullian tells us that prayers for the dead (meaningless without Purgatory) were of Apostolic ordinance; Origen alludes to it. Curious, is it not? Since all these were in their graves many centuries before the thirteenth. And as to the confessional, St Athanasius is a tolerably well-known and certainly early authority. As to the allegation against the secrecy of the confessional, the more than innuendo that things revealed *sub sigillo* can be and are repeated to the disadvantage of the penitent, we will only say this: the accusation is so palpably false and so confessedly unjust that to-day, at least, it is left in the hands or mouths of "ex-nuns," "escaped monks," and other such base fellows of the lewder sort. We fancy we remember that it was from time to time met with in somewhat higher, though not by any means the highest circles in 1876. But, please note, this is a work dated on its title-page 1919, and with no indication there that this is not the first time it has seen the light.

Of course, we have the inevitable cry that the Church and Science are absolutely incompatible. "Then has it come in truth to this, that Roman Christianity and Science are recognised by their respective adherents as being absolutely incompatible; they cannot exist together—one must yield to the other; mankind must make its choice, it

cannot have both." Greater rubbish and more absolute falsehood never fell from the pen of ignorant bigot. Who are the "adherents" of "Roman Christianity" who have made any such statement? Nowhere are we told. Huxley, as the self-appointed spokesman of Science, said something like it in his day and from his very mistaken point of view, but Huxley does not seem to have existed for Dr. Draper. And, in any case, a score of books then and since have shown that Huxley was entirely mistaken. We must suppose that Dr. J. J. Walsh's *The Popes and Science* was unknown to Dr. Draper, but it has been before the world for some time; it was accessible to those who are responsible for this edition; and it, and a number of other books which might be named, absolutely and finally dispose of this and many more of the errors with which Dr. Draper's book is loaded.

Let us suggest to those who want a brief refutation, that it was a Pope who directed Catholics to welcome every new discovery regardless of the source from which it came, and that it was a most distinguished man of science and a devout Catholic, de Lapperent, who stated that no one had ever felt more free in his scientific work and writings than had he.

It is time to make an end of this matter, for further proof is surely unnecessary. Here is a book which appears in the "International Scientific Series," which is packed with inaccuracies and downright falsehoods, and yet which appears without any protest other than that "scrannel pipe"

which here utters its ineffectual complaint. A book similarly misrepresenting any other person, thing, institution, or period *but* the Catholic Church, would receive very short shrift from the reviewers, even the most ignorant of them. But not here. Why? I have often asked myself this question, and the only explanation I can summon up is that the wells, as Cardinal Newman put it, have been too thoroughly poisoned. Those who have been brought up from their infancy, as the present writer was, to believe that the Church of God is a mass of lies, frauds, and foolishnesses will feel no surprise but a natural contentment of mind when they plunge into the muddy waters of the *Conflict*. No doubt better and more instructed days are with us now, yet the old poison still works. The lie has had its start and maintains its proverbial position in front. How long will it be before the hounds of truth pull it down in the open?

FLUELLEN AND HIS SUCCESSORS

THAT fascinating side-walk of Anthropology known as Folk-lore has during the past half-century attracted a vast number of workers, amongst whom very naturally have been a very large number who may be described, without any disrespect, as "amateurs"—that is, persons without any preliminary training in the methods of science. That they have done splendid work as collectors no one will deny (not that all collectors are "amateurs" by any manner of means); it is where they begin to try to argue for their theories from their facts that trouble begins. And here we are reminded of the wise words of Sir Alfred Lyall, uttered a number of years ago, but truer than ever to-day: "I think that one effect of the accumulation of materials has been to encourage speculative generalisation, because it has provided a repertory out of which one may make arbitrary selection of examples and precedents to suit any theory."

When one comes to examine them with ordinary care, a great many of these theories will be discovered to have been built up on the lines laid down by Fluellen, whose name, therefore, heads this inquiry.

Alexander and Harry must at all hazards be made to correspond one to the other. Hence, "if you look in the maps of the world, I warrant you

shall find, in the comparisons between Macedon and Monmouth, that the situations, look you, is both alike. There is a river in Macedon; and there is also, moreover, a river at Monmouth. It is called Wye at Monmouth; but it is out of all my brains what is the name of the other river; but 'tis all one, 'tis alike as my fingers is to my fingers, and there is salmons in both."

Forgetfulness of the inadequacy of this form of argument and of the other golden rule that, because an explanation explains, it is not, therefore, necessarily the true explanation, accounts for quite a number of the curious theories day by day laid before the reading public.

To Catholics, indeed to all Christians keeping a firm grip on fundamentals, without doubt a daily decreasing number outside the Church, this matter is one of great interest, for it is quite easy to see how the method of which I have been speaking can be applied, and, as a matter of fact, has been freely applied, to Scriptural narratives. Here it has been found to come in uncommonly handily by those who above all things want, as Fr. R. Knox (in pre-"Father" days) pointed out, to accommodate Jones. "Jones is a banker in a provincial town; he has been to the University, and formed a taste for serious reading which he has not lost in the midst of worldly employments. . . . As a result of a surfeit of Baasha at his public school and an overdose of Hegel at college, his religious ideas have arrived at a state quite beyond his power to express: a state in which he never thinks much of going to church, except now and then to hear

a brainy Minor Canon discoursing (with frequent reference to Browning) on the Problem of Pain. His local vicar, one or two old college friends, and a diocesan bishop who has formed the hazy idea that this is the sort of man we want to take orders, ask him out to luncheon at intervals, with the double idea that they are doing him good and keeping themselves broad-minded by cultivating the acquaintance of an intelligent agnostic. 'Such a good man,' they all declare, '*anima naturaliter Christiana* and all that.' And the problem arises in each of their minds: How can we so dock and dovetail the faith, so leave out of sight its unfortunate insistence on miracle, so reinterpret its crude statement of the Atonement, so retranslate its antiquated formularies, that Jones can honestly become a communicant?"¹

To such the discoveries so called of the Folklorists come as a boon and a blessing. "My dear Jones, why bother about the Incarnation, or Virgin Birth, or Crucifixion, or indeed anything? Can it be that you are unaware that there is a more or less accurate parallel to all these in the case of heathen tribes of to-day or of some bygone day, and therefore these stories, in spite of their importance to many generations of believers, in these latter days need not trouble the mind?" And so from one watering down to another we approach a point where it becomes difficult to understand what the Apostles, who must, it would seem, have known that they were engaged in propagating a mass of falsehoods and inventions, had to gain

¹ *Some Loose Stones*, p. 9.

besides the inevitable martyrdom with which all but one ended his career. Amongst other things unexplained by this method is why the pusillanimous Peter and the cowardly tribe who deserted their Master in his moment of peril, suddenly developed, after Pentecost (no doubt some day to be explained as a shamanistic performance of unusual merit), into men with the courage of lions, and so continued until they went to their deaths undaunted. But the fact that an effect cannot rise higher than its cause is just one of the important facts which is neglected by the Fellowship of Fluellen. It is worth while to develop this matter a little, and, for the sake of those who have not dipped into the subject of Folk-lore, it may be said that it deals with the vast mass of stories, customs, and the like disseminated over the world and often presenting, even in the most distant parts, surprising resemblances. Have all these customs, which so closely resemble one another, one single centre of origin, or is it possible that the same custom may independently originate in different parts of the world? It is the question which is perhaps at this moment the storm-centre of anthropological discussion. We have those, like Professor Elliot Smith, who maintain that "no important ethnological custom was ever invented independently or arose in more than one place," and arising more or less out of this or closely connected with it is his so-called "Heliolithic Theory" which so much delighted Mr. Wells, in his *Outline*, a theory which derives all enlightenment and early civilisation from ancient Egypt. On the other

hand, we have a competent anthropologist, like Dr. Goldenweiser, complaining that "Elliot Smith has achieved the questionable distinction of outdoing the dogmatism of the evolutionist by his reckless utilisation of diffusion as an interpretation of widespread cultural similarities, supporting his theory by a comparative material as inexhaustible in quantity and handled as uncritically as was the comparative material of the evolutionist," by whom is meant the evolutionary ethnologist author of so many bizarre and inaccurate ladders of custom.

And with regard to the "Heliolithic" idea, the same authority tells us that the methods used by the author in question are "so loose that the entire speculative edifice erected by him can at best be regarded as another link in that chain of top-heavy hypotheses, born of uncontrolled flight of the imagination and unchecked by either patient research or a strict method of procedure." This is not cited as conclusive evidence that the "Heliolithic Theory" is all wrong, but it will serve to show that, though one authority may proclaim his dogma and others acclaim what he has said, if we look for him, we shall generally discover some equally important pundit who will have none of it. Between such differing doctors it is not easy for the public to decide. What are we to say about a child's tale like the "Brewery of Eggshells," which ranges from Wales to Japan, and did long before Japan began to read European books or know anything about Europe? What, again, about "Cinderella"? An ingenious and diligent lady, by reducing this story to its lowest denominator,

succeeded in finding no less than three hundred and forty-five variants throughout the world, and, had she been spared to us longer, might even have made the number up to one per diem. Were all those copies, or were some original, and, if so, which? The fact is that it is very hard to decide the question. The parable of the Body and the Members is a part of the sacred writings of other faiths besides the Christian: must they necessarily have borrowed from one another? To me it seems that there is no necessity to adopt such an hypothesis, for the parable is of so obvious a character as to make it reasonable to suppose that it might have risen in various minds without any kind of relation to one another. There is a very peculiar kind of Pan-pipe, where each closed pipe is coupled with an open one, so that, when blown, the octave is sounded. This is met with only, on the one hand, in the Solomon Islands and Western Polynesia, and, on the other, in Peru and Bolivia. Did one locality copy it from the other? It is hard to believe it—harder, I think, than to imagine that two discoverers lit independently on the same idea. Let us never assume independence until transmission has been disproved, says Graeber very wisely, if we read his statement with sufficient understanding to forget its infringement of the rules of formal logic. Thorndyke, an authority on the subject, says that, in his opinion, the indigenous cases are to the transmitted as one is to nine.

We have pursued this discussion because it is important to learn that the "copyist" school is not the only one, and the point of that remark will

shortly appear. For one of the allegations made by persons of this school is that the Catholic Church, in most of her observances and even in many of her doctrines, is nothing more than a rehash of ancient Pagan customs and beliefs. Buddhists have rosaries and so have Catholics; see how the latter have copied the former—of course, that is the sequence which is suggested. Yet surely, with the abacus under our eyes, a very modest amount of imagination might rise to the pitch of suggesting that so simple a method of counting even prayers might arise independently in several places. I remember a friend, not then a Catholic though since a stout servant of the Church, telling me that for years in his early days he supposed the rosary to have been no more than a clever device for counting cattle in and out of the enclosures in South America, that having been the only use to which he had seen the beads put.

There is, perhaps, nowhere a greater abundance of examples of what has just been mentioned than in Sir James Frazer's great book *The Golden Bough*, which, having originally consisted of three volumes and subsequently dilated itself into twelve, has now come out in one as a work accessible to all. A great work, as we have said, since no scholar can deny the vast and unwearied labour which has amassed the treasures of learning which it contains, culled from all sources and tracked down usually to the originals. As a treasure-house of this kind unstinted praise may be given to the book; but when it comes to the arguments which are built upon the facts and observations, then we find our-

selves confronted far too often with the form of Fluellen. Let us examine a few instances and, for the first, select the closing passage of the book. The author, summing up the fruit of his labours, tells his readers how on an evening visit to the grove of Nemi, where once flourished that golden bough which forms the basis of his book, he saw the last rays of the sun "touching with a crest of fire" the dome of St Peter's, and he proceeds: "The place has changed but little since Diana received the homage of her worshippers in the sacred grove. The temple of the sylvan goddess, indeed, has vanished, and the King of the Wood no longer stands sentinel over the Golden Bough. But Nemi's woods are still green, and as the sunset fades above them there comes to us, borne on the swell of the wind, the sound of the church bells of Aricia ringing the Angelus. Ave Maria! Sweet and solemn they chime out from the distant town and die lingeringly away across the wide Campanian marshes. *Le roi est mort, vive le roi!* Ave Maria." Stripped of its rather over-sugared sentimentality, this statement means one of two things. Either it is an amplification of the adage, *Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose*; that is, one foolish and dying religion has followed another which was foolish and is dead. Or the underlying suggestion is that devotion to our Lady is the direct descendant of the worship of Diana, and in that way it seems pretty clear that most readers will accept it. If the former reading of the passage is correct, then there is no more to be said.

If, after reasonable study of the Gospels, one is

quite sure that the religion of Christ has no higher sanction than the worship of Diana—well, there is nothing left to be said on the subject but words of pity. If, however, as seems far more likely, the second solution is the correct one, then once more we are listening to the accents of Fluellen telling us all about the river in Macedon and the river in Monmouth and the salmons which inhabit both, for, of a truth, there is even less basis for the comparison of Mary with Diana.

Let us next turn to a far more important matter, and one in which we are not left in any doubt as to the meaning of the author—namely, his discussion of the significance of the Passion and Crucifixion of the Founder of the Christian religion; and here we approach a subject which it is a little difficult for any Christian to consider with perfect equanimity. According to the work with which we are concerned, the Babylonians and their Persian conquerors had a custom in the spring of taking a condemned criminal, decking him in royal robes and treating him as a monarch for five days, at the end of which time he was stripped, whipped, and hanged. During their exile in Babylonia the author thinks that the Jews picked up this custom and carried it out each year in March at the Feast of Purim. On this, he thinks, is built up the story of the Passion. To begin with, there is this serious weak point in the theory that the custom is absolutely unheard of historically amongst the Jews. It is not proposed here to enter into the details of this subject, for that has already been done fully and admirably, though without the slightest visible

effect on later editions of *The Golden Bough*, by the late Mr. Andrew Lang in his *Magic and Religion*.¹ But in order that those who do not care to refer to this source may be aware of the main lines of that argument, his summary may be quoted: "We hope to have shown that Mr. Frazer's theory of the origin of the belief in the Divinity of Christ already rests on three scarcely legitimate hypotheses. First there is the hypothesis that kings were slain to release a known deity, incarnate in them, and to provide a better human vehicle. Of this rite no instances were given. Next there is the hypothesis that the King of Babylon was annually sacrificed and succeeded by a new king, who was sacrificed at the end of the year. Historical evidence does not exist, and the supposed custom is beyond belief. Thirdly, we are to believe in proxies or substitutes who die annually for the king. Of this practice no actual example is adduced." The Babylonian victim was a criminal, as is stated above, but this was not always so. Originally, according to Sir James Frazer, the actual King of Babylon was killed each year, and it was only at a later period that a substitute in the shape of an already condemned criminal was permitted. Well may Mr. Lang say that the first story is incredible, since our knowledge of human nature surely compels us to the conclusion that, however pleasant his year of office might have been expected to be, it is incredible that any member of the royal house or any other house would

¹ Chap. iv : *The Origin of the Christian Faith*.

ascend the throne knowing full well that at the end of his brief span of kingship he would be put to death.

That, however, is not the real point. Instances of a nature germane to the theory, such as that of the Shilluks and their divine and sacrificed kings, to which a recent reviewer in *Nature* has alluded so triumphantly, may be multiplied to any amount, but only to strengthen the argument now to be set forth. Let us for the sake of this argument grant the fact of which we have no particle of historical evidence, that there was such a sacrifice annually amongst the Jews at the Feast of Purim: what then? Why, then, how is it to be explained that amongst a people, we must suppose, habituated to this kind of annual performance, one such performance should have produced the prodigious results which no person can deny followed upon it? How was it, we may ask again, that the disciples and companions of the so-called mock-king, who must have perfectly well known who and what he was, should subsequent to his death have been changed from the cowardly creatures that they once were and have become men of such courage and capacity as to have inaugurated the movement which unquestionably changed the whole history of the world? It certainly seems as if nothing but some extraordinary incapacity to appreciate the perspective of history permits the formulation of such a theory as that outlined above. Apart from this we confess that we do not find the appeal to the practices of a not over-well-known tribe of tattooed negroes a very convincing parallel, and are

again reminded of Sir Alfred Lyall's pregnant remark already quoted.

Mankind is numerous and various, and if you hunt far and long enough and do not mind some stretching of the long arm, you can find something to suggest an explanation even if there is a simpler one lying right in front of you. Touching for the King's Evil goes back in England to St Edward, King and Confessor, and in France to St Louis. When you have an obvious explanation in the admitted belief during their lifetimes in the sanctity of these two personages, why explore the South Seas for *tabus* and the like in search of a solution of the problem? Yet this is what has been attempted.¹

After its Founder, the Church which he founded comes in for attention, for there is the usual misconception as to what was borrowed and—far more important—what was not, by the early Church from surrounding faiths. Sir James thinks that the coincidences between the pagan and Christian festivals are too many to be accidental, and instances the date ultimately fixed for Christmas Day—a point dealt with in another essay.

He proceeds: "The inflexible Protestantism"—an infelicitously chosen word—"of the primitive missionaries, with their fiery denunciations of heathendom, had been exchanged for the supple policy, the easy tolerance, the comprehensive charity of shrewd ecclesiastics, who clearly perceived that if Christianity was to conquer the world it could only do so by relaxing the too rigid principles of

¹ *The Golden Bough*, pp. 89-90.

its Founder, by widening a little the narrow gate which leads to salvation.”¹

It may fairly be said that no more thoroughly misleading statement than the above can well be imagined, and in it the writer out-Herods Herod by going far beyond the claim of the Anglican Homilies that the Church of Rome hath erred for eight centuries, since its backslidings seem to have commenced long before that. Who were these “primitive missionaries with their fiery denunciations of heathendom”? One must assume that the Apostles, including St Paul, are meant. Who, then, were the “shrewd ecclesiastics” who were so eager to minimise? Again one must suppose that St Paul is included, for he proclaimed that he was become all things to all men that all might be saved. Common sense, without any wondrous shrewdness, would have shown these early Fathers of the Church that, in all lawful things, accommodation should be made to the difficulties of those whom they desired to bring into the Fold. What about the Council where the burning question of circumcision was debated and settled? Was this no relaxation? Or again, the use of once heathen temples for Christian worship, a thing which we have traces of even in the early history of the Church in Britain?

But there was a point beyond which relaxation could not go. That point was just the teaching of its Founder which Sir James thinks was transgressed, though we think he would find it difficult to show where. For, that there could be any relaxation of the teaching of the Founder is a thing

¹ *The Golden Bough*, p. 361.

which surely should never have been suggested by anyone familiar, as of course this writer is, with the fact that an army of martyrs went to a variety of cruel tortures and deaths rather than throw a pinch of incense on the altar of the divinity of the Emperor; in the eyes of the not over-religious Roman people a mere act of courtesy almost like writing one's name in the calling-book of some important official. But it was just what could not be done without sacrifice of principles, and so let it be "*ad leones*" or any other end rather than relax there. The Christian priest could and did bless and use a heathen temple; he could and did take a well once consecrated to some sylvan deity and transfer it to some more Christian purpose by utilising it for baptism or perchance re-dedicating it to some holy personage. He could choose a day—not knowing, in fact, what the actual day was—on which to celebrate the birth or death of his Lord; and he might deliberately choose for that purpose a day previously used for some heathen festival just because—being quite unessential—it might make the change of religion a little less difficult for some reluctant pagan. But take part in pagan ceremonies, or adopt the *Taurobolium*, or fall in with the well-known syncretic methods of the Romans, whereby strange gods from all lands were incorporated into their pantheon—these were just the things that he could not and would not do. And it was just this attitude—pestilent obstinacy, no doubt, it seemed to be—which made the Christians so mysterious and obnoxious to the Roman citizens around them. The late Mr. Mallock made the

position perfectly clear when in his *Is Life Worth Living?* he showed us the Church seated on a rock around which boiled the waves of the ocean of events laden with the wreckage of a hundred religions. Piece after piece of rubbish passes by and no notice is taken. But every now and then something drifts along and is taken up and incorporated into the fabric because it was something which could be not only innocently but usefully employed.

Before concluding these remarks, let us turn a little further to this question of copying. It seems to appear to some, especially on the Macedon and Monmouth principle, that it is quite easy to feel sure of this on all occasions, and, of course, if one subscribes fully and finally to the doctrine that no significant ethnological feature ever was twice discovered, there is an end to discussion. Time was when, following Tylor, it was the custom to explain the religious beliefs of many savage races as half-forgotten and less than half-understood teachings of early Christian missionaries, usually Jesuits, Franciscans, and the like. That theory has broken down, as the erudite Fr. Schmidt¹ has shown, when exposed to historical examination; and it now appears to critical writers that it is a most difficult matter to apportion the share—if any—of borrowing in these matters of custom and specially of religion, and as an example there may be quoted a passage from a recent work in which this matter is handled with a care and skill, not to say with a caution, which might well be imitated by modern Fluellenists. "To draw a sharp line between in-

¹ *L'Origine de l'Idée de Dieu*, p. 142 f.

digenous and borrowed features may remain difficult," says Goldenweiser in a recent work.¹

And he brings forward as an instance in point the Peyote cult of the Winnebago, a North American Indian tribe living in Wisconsin and near by.

The matter is fully dealt with by Paul Radin, who says: "There are a number of cases where it is impossible to determine whether we are dealing with a reinterpretation or with a substitution." Here let us note that the Indians in question were the Puons of the "Jesuit Relations," so had been brought in contact with Christianity. Yet notice the caution of the writer: "As this is an exceedingly important question, I will enumerate a few examples: baptism; the crook; confessions; and the story of the two roads. Dipping one's hand in water and drawing lines on the forehead of an individual sounds like the real Christian baptism, to be sure" (and parenthetically it may be said would have at once been hailed as such by the whole tribe of Fluellenists). "Yet we know that painting the patient's face was a prominent feature in the shaman's treatment of disease; and that Rave speaks of it in connection with the conversion of his own wife. Are we, then, to regard the baptism here as a reinterpretation of the old Winnebago custom, or as a real substitution of Christian baptism? And if the latter alternative is to be accepted, what influence are we to ascribe to the older Winnebago belief in suggesting Christian baptism?"

"The same question will have to be answered in

¹ *Early Civilisation*, p. 322.

connection with the crook, confessions, and the story of the two roads. The Bear Clan had two ornamented sticks, of which Rave's family was the keeper. In general there was not much difference between these and the Christian shepherd's crook.

"What is the relation of the two? In the ritualistic myth telling of the road to heaven, one finds the bifurcating road—one leading to Earth-Maker, the other to the Bad Spirit. In the Peyote cult we find the familiar Biblical story of the two roads—one leading to heaven, the other to eternal damnation. Again, let us take the question of the confessions. In their present form they certainly seem Christian, with a strong suggestion of the early Methodist. Yet giving testimony to the magical virtues of herbs in order to prove that one had been blessed by certain spirits, was characteristic of all Winnebagoes when first participating in a religious cult society. Granted even that all these things really are Christian elements, it is quite obvious that the fact that they were so readily accepted suggests a relation between them and the older elements enumerated, and that just as in the case of ceremonial units, so here, too, there has been a selective borrowing, determined by the specific possessions of the recipient's cultural background."

There is a great deal in this very careful appreciation which is eminently applicable to the question before us, and notably to the matter so recently touched on—namely, the relation of the early Church and its ministers to the surrounding pagandom. Into that we do not propose to go any further. Let it suffice that the extract just given shows

the difficulty that there may be in deciding on the fact—and, granted the fact, of the limits—of borrowing. Similarity in customs, especially of striking customs, is undoubtedly a signal calling attention to a matter deserving of full study; but that it is to be taken at once as proof that one of the users of the custom borrowed it from the other, is going, so it would appear, quite beyond the record.

JUST ONE OF A NUMBER!

A MODERN EXPLANATION OF THE EARLY DAYS
OF CHRISTIANITY

EVERY man, says Carlyle somewhere, is a poet when he reads a great poem with comprehension and appreciation. In like manner, without any pretension to the title of historian, an interested student of days gone by may surely form some kind of opinion as to the factors which are necessary for the building-up of the man who is to instruct his fellow-men in the tales of old, far-off, unhappy and even happy things known as history.

In the first place, it is quite clear, since bricks or the like there must be for the building of houses, that the would-be historian must be possessed of all the available facts in reference to the period with which he proposes to deal. That at least is not a point that requires to be laboured, nor does the second—namely, that he must have purged himself of all bias. He must not permit himself to imitate Dr. Samuel Johnson, who in his Parliamentary Reports did not always “allow the Whig dogs to have the best of it.” If, in fact, the “Whig dogs” did have the best of it, much as it may go against his grain, the fact must be honestly reported. He must not only paint Cromwell, wart and all, but—how much harder a task!—he

must, no matter how ardent a lover of the Commonwealth, refrain from painting Charles I with the wart which he did not possess. Again—and here is another point on which all will be agreed—he must be able to seize and make plain the salient features of his case; and even if he occasionally errs over minor details, he must not damn himself by failure to appreciate the points on which to go wrong is to write false history. In a discourse on the teaching of history, I once heard Mr. Belloc make use of a simile which struck me as just and forcible. If one had to describe a mountain such as the Matterhorn—which, personally, I have never seen—it would not very seriously matter if its height was estimated as a little more or a little less than it actually is, though naturally accuracy here would be an advantage. It would not perhaps much matter if there were some slight inaccuracy in the description of the extent to which it was snow-clad, or as to the exact shape of the summit. But if the describer told me, who have never seen it, that this mountain was of sand, he would at once disappear for me as a person worth listening to. He would, in a word, have shown cardinal and fundamental ignorance not only of the facts of this case but of the general subject of Physical Geography, and indeed of the various topics which would make him fit to talk about any mountain. It might be put that the intending historian must either be born with a sense of historical perspective, or, if not born with it, must by prayer and fasting endeavour to secure it, if indeed it be securable by those not originally endowed with it. It is just

the absence of this perspective, of the ability to place themselves in the environment in which the persons with whom they are dealing had their being, which causes some writers to make what is even to the general reader, who is not a professed historian, such a mess of their subjects. Take the ever-recurring case of Galileo—the “King Charles’s head” of most anti-Catholic writers—I admit at once that it is not a case of which we have any reason to be specially proud. Yet even Huxley, who had no love for holy Mother Church, admitted that, having gone into the case, he thought that on the whole “the Pope and the Cardinals had rather the best of it.” It was at Rome that he made his investigation and came to this conclusion, and the only way in which he could have arrived at it was that he had really succeeded in getting into the atmosphere of the period when the drama of Galileo was enacted. When one does that; when one appreciates the irritating gadfly that Galileo himself was; when one grasps the general attitude of both sides to matters of religious dispute; turns an eye on the non-Catholic Kepler, also for supposed astronomical heresy, flying from the wrath of his brother Protestants of the University of Tübingen to take refuge with the Jesuits at Ingolstadt; when one reflects upon the latter days of Galileo himself, comfortably established in his own villa at Arcetri and dying with all the aids of the Church, including the special blessing of the Sovereign Pontiff; in a word, when one tries, in imagination, to forget the twentieth and live for a time in the seventeenth century—then, even if we

cannot forgive, we can most surely understand, and at least see the excuse that there was for all the events in that most unfortunate struggle. Indeed, I think it impossible not to emerge from a study of the whole business with the conviction that, *pace* the undying and apparently unkillable falsehoods of so many Protestant textbooks, Galileo from the point of view of that day, whether that point be Catholic or not, really received uncommonly mild treatment.

These perhaps rather obvious, even jejune, observations on the writing of history by one who is only a historian in his appreciation of real history have been called forth by consideration of what may perhaps be spoken of as an *obiter dictum* of Mr. H. G. Wells, who, as all the world knows, is the author of many books, and amongst them of a large, ambitious, much advertised, and widely sold *Outline of the World's History*. I hasten to say that, whilst I have read the book in question, I am not going to make any personal criticism of it. I owe a debt of gratitude to the Wells of *Kipps*, surely one of the most delightful and satisfying of books; and of *The Wheels of Chance*, another of the same brand; and, if I am to add a third, the undying *Mr. Polly*. Nor am I going to refrain from expressing my interest in the later and, behind a curtain of respect, be it said, far duller works like *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* and others which have followed it. Mr. Frith's "Derby Day" and "Railway Station" are not great works of art, but as historical documents they will always be of great value, and so will *Mr. Britling* and some of his

successors. Hence I feel sure that I would rather go to Mr. Wells for entertainment than I would for historical information, and I am supported in the second statement by a review which I read of his historical book in *Art and Archæology*, which all educated persons will be well aware is one of the best journals of its type published in the United States. It is also, I suppose, about as neutral a *terrain* as could be found on either side of the Atlantic. I do not know who the reviewer may have been, but I noticed that he complained, amongst other things, that "the chief defects of the book are the faulty perspective and proportions, and the preposterous valuations. Nearly three hundred pages are wasted on geologic æons and conjectural prehistoric human history, for which a brief chapter would have sufficed. More space is given to Philip and Alexander of Macedon than to the civilisation and literature of Greece from Salamis to Chæronea. The Renaissance is lost to sight and the entire political history of modern Europe from 1400 to 1800 muddled and skimmed, in two confusing chapters on the 'Renaissance of Western Civilisation' and 'Princes, Parliaments, and Powers.' The chief topics of nineteenth-century history for Mr. Wells seem to be the scholarship of Karl Marx and the bad education of Gladstone."

It will be noted that this critic complains of a want of historical perspective, and that is just what appears to me to be exhibited by the brief *obiter dictum*, as I have called it, which has provoked the reflections set down in this essay, reflections which other and similar loose statements by other

authorities have awakened more than once in my mind.

In the *London Mercury* there appeared over the signature of Mr. Belloc a criticism of the work which I have just mentioned. This criticism endorsed on the whole the accuracy of the details, but somewhat severely criticised the treatment and, in a word, the perspective of the writer. The latter wrote a letter in reply in which unjust treatment was alleged but not, I thought, in any way proved. But what interested me was the brief statement in it that Christianity was "one of the numerous blood and salvation religions that infected the decaying Empire." The critic in the American publication does not mention the treatment of Christianity as one of the neglected or indifferently treated topics in the book, yet I think it might not unfairly find a place in such a list, and the statement just quoted does exhibit the author's mentality in quite an interesting way and seems capable of being submitted to an instructive analysis—an effort which may be the more useful since there are a few other less well known writers who seem to think that to belittle Christianity by vague and unsustained observations is to deal it a crushing blow, and who certainly do tend by their writings to lead astray the imperfectly educated multitude.

At any rate, in these words we get Mr. Wells's compendious statement as to Christianity. It was just one of a lot of puerile fantasies flitting round the death-bed of what had once been a great Empire. Let us analyse the statement bit by bit, and endeavour to ascertain how far the different

allegations are capable of being sustained. The “*numerous* blood and salvation religions”: were they really so numerous? I suppose that those cults which used the *Taurobolium* are the religions alluded to. Let us see how numerous they were by tracing this horrible custom, which came originally from Phrygia, where it was associated with the worship of the Great Mother of the Gods, or Cybele, to use a better known name. Her emblem, or as some say the goddess herself, a black meteoric stone, was brought to Rome from Pessinus, and though the ceremonies connected with her religion were for years confined to Phrygians, they gradually affected the Roman populace, and thus entered the *Taurobolium*, the first known performance of which was in A.D. 134. This took place at Puteoli during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, in honour of Venus Cælestis; perhaps in the Roman syncretic terms equivalent to Cybele. When first introduced the *Taurobolium* was performed for the welfare of the Emperor, for the Empire, or for some such intention, and usually took place on March 24, that being the *Dies Sanguinis*, one of the various feast-days of Cybele. A trench was dug in the ground over which was placed a perforated platform. The priest went into the trench; a bull was led on to the platform; and his throat was cut so that his blood might pour over the priest beneath, who wallowed in it and even took it into his mouth. We need not discuss the significance of the business, which seems to have been connected with ideas of Mother Earth and her fertility. Moreover, later on the *Taurobolium*

became an individual affair, and wealthy persons ordered and paid for such a ceremony. The poet Prudentius gives an account of one, and a vivid summary of his description is the theme of "Red Magic," one of the stories in Fr. Martindale's fascinating little book *In God's Nursery*. In this story the picture is shown us through the eyes of a boy spectator. The bulls, which are to be the victims in the affair, are brought forth decorated with trappings, and "painfully, as in a nightmare, he watched the destined four [*i.e.*, the human participants] pass through the little door and stand beneath the perforated roof [whereon were the bulls about to be sacrificed]: watched the priests raise simultaneously their triangular knives, and slice them through the great veins in the bulls' throats. The blood spouted furiously out, drenching the floor, pouring violently through the holes on to the votaries beneath. Through apertures in the side of the platform the frantic crowd could see the three men and the woman soaking themselves in the crimson stream, flinging themselves on back and side and face, kneading the blood into eyes and ear, hair and beard, mouthing and swallowing it. At last when the carcasses lay bloodless and still, the four came out, 'regenerated for eternity,' 'hideous to behold.'" It is a horrible picture, but one must look at it if one is to understand what is meant by "one of the blood and salvation religions."

"*Renatus in æternum*" was the phrase used in connection with those who had undergone this filthy ceremony. Some will have it that it was a sort of

loan from Christianity, but Professor Showerman¹ will have none of that. Others have thought that Christianity derived in some way its sacrament of baptism from this source. That is dealt with in another essay in this book.

As to the real relationship between the two, we may again hear Professor Showerman, who puts the connection quite as closely as facts allow. "The gorgeous rites of her worship," he says, speaking of the Great Mother of the Gods, "its mystic doctrine of communion with the divine through enthusiasm, its promise of regeneration through baptism of blood in the *Taurobolium*, were features which attracted the masses of the people and made it a strong rival of Christianity: and its resemblance to the new religion, however superficial, made it, in spite of the scandalous practices which grew up around it, a stepping-stone to Christianity when the tide set in against paganism." In addition to the *Taurobolium* there was a ceremony called the *Criobolium*, where a ram was substituted for the bull. This ceremony was more associated with Attis in relation to Cybele—a matter which cannot here be pursued. At the time this cult was flourishing at Rome there were three great exotic religions besides Christianity—two besides that specified. These were the cult of Mithras, and that of Isis derived from Egypt and at first a cult of quite singular purity. It degenerated, but it does not seem that there is any evidence of any connection

¹ Quotations from *Encyclopædia Britannica*, last ed., s.v. "Taurobolium" and "The Great Mother of the Gods."

between this cult and blood ceremonies. At one time apparently a serious rival to Christianity, it lingered into the fifth century and then disappeared. As to Mithraism, that is dealt with elsewhere in this series of essays, and, as there stated, there is some doubt whether the *Taurobolium* was actually absorbed into this religion. The ceremony went on until some time in the fourth century, when there is evidence that it took place, as it had previously taken place on more than one occasion, at a spot not far from where St Peter's now stands. Inscriptions found, when excavations were being made for that building, prove that fact. But whether these ceremonies took place under the ægis of Cybele or of Mithras we do not know. Well, that exhausts the religions and the blood cults. Attis and his priests? There was brutal self-mutilation there, no doubt, but the Attis cult was part of the same Great Mother of the Gods complex. Hence we have certainly one and possibly two "blood and salvation" religions. Hardly what one would call "numerous," even if one lumps Christianity in with the others, and surely that would be wresting language and thought to an intolerable extent, for what reasonable connection is to be found between the *Taurobolium* and the Sacrifice on the Cross, still less with the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass, no one but a man set on finding parallels where none exist could possibly discover.

I think we must rule out the word "numerous."

"Infested the decaying Empire": how about that phrase? Let us turn our attention in this direction for a few moments. Can it be justified?

No doubt the desire is to describe Christianity, with what might be called its fellow puerilities like Mithraism, as the bacilli of destruction which batten on dead organic matter. But is it historically true that the Empire was dying? In a sense no doubt we all begin to die on the day that we begin to live, but it would be the height of absurdity to talk of a sturdy child as a dying member of the human race. Nor would one talk of a youth of twenty or a man of forty in those terms, though obviously each was nearer the portals of the grave, humanly speaking, than the child.

To use the textbook phrase, Rome fell in 476; that is, the Empire fell. That it did not cease to exist as a functioning complex Mr. Belloc tries to prove in his book *Europe and the Faith*, and few can have been wholly unconvinced by his arguments. But this at least may be said, that by the date mentioned it was no longer the thing that it had been. But between that date and the date when Christianity was introduced into the city, and had even secured some considerable footing therein, many years had elapsed, more than have passed since white men first settled in the New World. Let us consider something of what had happened during those years. In 29 B.C. Octavian—afterwards Augustus—returning to Rome in triumph, closed the doors of the Temple of Janus; and closed they remained until A.D. 242, when the epoch of the Pax Romana, perhaps the greatest that the world has ever seen, came to an end. During that time, as never since, travellers could and did pursue their ways in peace and security

over excellent roads made and maintained by the Government in all parts of the world then known to the ancients. Look at the map in Miss Skell's most interesting little book on *Travel in the Roman Empire*, and see how, as Gibbon said, it was possible for anyone to travel from the Wall—say Carlisle or Newcastle-on-Tyne—to Jerusalem on first-class roads, save for two short sea passages, and find those roads provided with hostels and change-houses for horses. Further, one could travel from Jerusalem to North Africa and right along the southern coasts of the Mediterranean until one arrived at what are now called the Straits of Gibraltar along roads now obliterated or at least unsafe for traffic compared to what they were at that day. That does not look like decay, and, as a matter of fact, with the long-continued peace came, as there must always come, steadily increasing prosperity. Now, it was just during this great epoch that Christianity had its birth and made its appearance in Rome, emerging at last from the Catacombs to take its place as the successor of the Empire. It was incidentally also during this time that Mithraism and the other Oriental religions which had imposed themselves upon the old, stiff religion of pre-Imperial times, flourished. Is it really correct to talk of them as infesting the decaying Empire? It seems to me that it is a pure misuse of words to do anything of the kind. If we are to use the word "decaying" for such a period, we must find another definition than that which ordinary folk are accustomed to employ. I can find no justification for that statement, still less for

that which remains in the phrase which I have been venturing to criticise.

Christianity is dismissed, and contemptuously dismissed, as just one of those absurd and out-of-date religions which pullulated in the Empire at the time of its decay—just that and nothing more!

If that thesis is to be maintained, we must ask for some reasonable explanation of a fact which is carefully ignored in the paragraph in question and, it may be added, in the book about which all this pother arose. Why did this one particular absurdity go on—why is it still going on—whilst the others have come to an end? None but the wilfully blind can fail to see that this is a matter which has got to be cleared up before we can even begin to think of agreeing with the thesis in question. Cybele and Attis have gone; gone is the Great Mother of the Gods; gone, too, are Astarte and Isis; the whole rabble rout of the heterogeneous pantheon of later Rome. Why did not Christianity go with them? Another essay in this book shows the splendid start and chance which Mithraism had: why is it gone, and why is Christianity still with us? The other religions have strayed so far from memory that it is only by the utmost patience that scholars can wring their secrets from slabs and inscriptions; from passing remarks in pagan writings; from the furious denunciations of early apologists

Where is Christianity to-day? If it was just one of these numerous absurdities, why did it take, and how has it held the place which it has occupied for centuries? How is it that this particular absurdity

has, *pace* Mr. Wells, secured the veneration and belief of an overwhelming preponderance of the best intellects of all ages?

Those who desire to disparage revelation are confronted at the very outset of their task with two facts, anthropological or historical, or whatever one may like to call them, which must be explained—namely, the existence of the Jews, and the spread and existence of the Catholic Church.

Believers in revelation have a satisfying answer to these inquiries, but there is no other explanation which has been put forward which will in any way hold water.

Christianity was just one of a number of religions. So one might say Shakespeare was just one of a number of poets who flourished in the spacious times of great Elizabeth. It would be unimpeachable fact, but it would be mighty poor criticism. From all which it would seem that the description resembles that of a sand Matterhorn.

THE RELIGION OF PREHISTORIC MAN¹

PREHISTORIC archæology has, in common with other sciences, and perhaps in even greater measure, made enormous strides in the past half-century. It may even be said that it has become a science, and ceased to be the prancing-ground of ill-instructed theory-spinners, who, from another branch of Anthropology, namely, Folklore, are being slowly dislodged to seek a refuge, perhaps in Occultism. Even so, it may seem almost impossible to come to any definite conclusions as to the religious beliefs of persons who lived so many thousands of years ago, and our knowledge of whom is solely based upon their somewhat scanty bodily remains, and their implements and works of art which have been the subject of study for the past half-century. Amongst the relics, none are more astonishing or more informing than these works of art.

At what period did these people live? It is a hard question to answer, and almost anything that is said about it can be little more than guess-work. Some authorities deal in hundreds of thousands of

¹ Spearing, *The Childhood of Art*, 1912; Parkyn, *An Introduction to the Study of Prehistoric Art*, 1915; Burkitt, *Prehistory*, 1921; Mainage, *Les Religions de la Préhistoire*, 1921—to this learned work, by the Professor of the History of Religion in the Institut Catholique de Paris, the writer is largely indebted in the present article.

years, basing their guess apparently on the supposed necessity for allowing time for man's development from some anthropoid ancestor by slow accumulation of variations, an unproved hypothesis, since even the question of small variation *versus* mutation is still in the balance and is likely to remain there. The more sober scholars deal only in tens of thousands of years, thinking that some twenty to forty thousand is time enough to account for all the relics, and the stratifications to which the relics belong. Suffice it here to say that the period in question was an early one in the history of mankind; and there let us leave it. We can learn or surmise something about these peoples from their implements, but such knowledge would be greatly restricted were it impossible to compare these implements with those made in quite recent times, or perhaps even now being made by the primitive races. The men of those distant ages were the primitives of their day, and, since their needs and most probably their ideas ran along similar or even identical lines, we can learn much about the former by studying the latter. Of course, there are pitfalls to be avoided in this comparative method of study; traps which have captured many a sturdy investigator; but we have learnt now what these are, and so can avoid them. In the first place, it is illegitimate to conclude that because a custom is prevalent amongst modern primitives, *therefore* it must also have been so amongst the ancients. What we may call documentary evidence is necessary to support the conclusion. Thus we have certain burial customs prevalent amongst both classes of primitives. We

know what the present man means by them. We may fairly conclude that his predecessor thought the same, no other valid explanation being forthcoming.

Secondly, even with documentary evidence, we should be careful not to attempt to explain it by modern instances of merely local occurrence. The custom should be as widespread as the burial custom just mentioned, if we are to accept it for our purpose. As stated in another essay, an attempt has been made to explain the Touching for the King's Evil (traceable back to St Edward, King and Confessor, in England, and to St Louis in France) by the system of *tabu* known in the South Sea Islands, an explanation on too narrow a basis, to say nothing of its other defects. Thirdly, their social reactions have affected the religions of recent primitives, such as the aborigines of Australia with their *intichiuma* ceremonies: it is fair to conclude that similar influences may have had their effect on the early races. Finally, it seems to be a safe rule to conclude that the more widespread any idea or custom is, the more ancient it is likely to be. These are common-sense rules, and, if we keep them before us when reading any of the numerous books, some of them purely fanciful, on the origins of religion, we shall be able to detect and avoid many fallacies.

The first mistake we must avoid is that of supposing that any information at our disposal to-day in any way proves how religion arose. Was it by a Primitive Revelation? Science certainly cannot say that it was not, nor, obviously, that it was. Of

course, there are a number of explanations as to how religion arose, all of which break down when tested by such facts as we have at our disposal. Tylor, for example, whose theory had much vogue, taught that man was led to postulate a soul by such experiences as dreams, fainting-fits, catalepsies, and, finally, by death. This idea man extended not only to animals, but even to inert objects. Through it he arrived at the idea of a future life and of the worship of ancestors. From this developed a further idea, that of exalted spirits—Jupiter, Neptune, and the rest—presiding over natural objects like the sky or sea. Finally, as a co-ordinating factor, monotheism came into existence with the idea of a Supreme Being. Durkheim, to take another example, attributed the idea to a growing recognition of society, and its need for a leader. And of course there are other views. Years ago, Andrew Lang, who, although he was accustomed to describe himself as “a bellettristic trifler,” was really a very deeply read and acute-minded anthropologist, when supporting the view of primary monotheism, also urged that there was then, and always would be, no sufficient evidence to form an unassailable theory as to the origin of religion. The fact is, that all these theories suffer from this original and fatal vice—they assume a primary period of atheism which is flatly contrary to all the evidence. In fact, scientific anthropologists are coming back to the belief in the primary monotheism they so long scouted. Professor Swanton, for example, when delivering the Presidential Address a few years ago to the American Anthropol-

logical Association, and dealing with theories long held but now to be abandoned (such as group marriage instead of primitive monogamy which seems to have been the rule), added the statement: "Even in the case of our regnant monotheism, it is a fair question whether it does not tie on to the belief in a sky-god extending back to the earliest days of religion among men, the only change which it has undergone being the relatively greater importance and deeper spiritualisation of the concept in later times."

If we cannot say how religion began, as seems pretty certain, can we say anything as to what its tenets or content may have been in those early days? Let us approach the subject by considering the burial customs, since on that point there is no room for difference of opinion. From the earliest true interments known to us, those at Chapelle aux Saintes in France (and this is quite far back in the Palæolithic Age) down to the end of the Prehistoric Period (and of course later) there is no doubt as to the custom of burying, with the dead, their implements, or food or other articles. This widespread custom amongst all primitive races indicated a belief in the survival of the active principle of the individual, the soul as we call it; and, further, of its survival in a world essentially such as a man had inhabited when alive. The dog can always find its way home; but the little child is apt to stray from the right path. Bury a dog with a child, and the dog may be supposed to lead the child safely to the Land of Souls. The custom belongs to both modern and ancient primitives; and it can hardly

be doubted that the *raison d'être* in the first case is that in the other. The Scythian was a great horseman; his chieftain was buried with a squadron of horses and men slain for the occasion. The Northman was a sailor, and his leader was buried in a *cyula*, or long ship, with its crew of fighting men to wage war with him in the other world. The dead Roman has the obolus for Charon between his lips. And the Mousterian man of the Chapelle aux Saintes has his flint implements, his food and his red pigment, so that he may paint himself and make a respectable appearance in the Kingdom of the Dead. "It is almost with a shock of surprise," says Professor Sollas (in *Ancient Hunters*), "that we discover this well-known custom, and all that it implies, already in existence during the last episode of the Great Ice Age." So far, we are on perfectly firm and agreed ground. Can we go further and say that prehistoric man, besides believing in a future life, had also a cult of the dead, either in the shape of real or mythical ancestors? Let us be careful at the outset to ask ourselves whether there is any real distinction between these two; whether there is not always a real person, far back perhaps, behind the mythical hero, and obscured from our vision by the concretion of tales which have collected around him? The only reply so far to be made to this inquiry is that there is no evidence to show that prehistoric man indulged in any such cult. There is no documentary evidence; nor does the ethnological evidence lend any support to such a theory, for it does not seem to belong to the oldest stratum of belief. The aborigines of Australia

were, when first explored, and probably still are, the most primitive people whose customs and life have been studied with care and completeness. There are three divisions of these, of which the most ancient seem to be the southern, and these have no cult of the dead. So far as it goes, this evidence is entirely opposed to Tylor's theory already outlined.

So much for the evidence, and it is of the first importance, which we can derive from burial customs. It is now time to consider the works of art remaining to us from that remote period. These fall into various categories. There are figurines, rude in workmanship, of nude females recalling the peculiar physical conformation of the Hottentot race. There are other carvings, in full round or high relief, often adorning implements such as the reindeer poignard, the handle of which is a reindeer in full charge. Or, again, there are those curious carved horns and bones, which are often called *bâtons de commandement*, and are supposed to be ceremonial staves, though their real use we cannot do more than guess at. There are almost innumerable scribings on stone, bone, and horn, representing animals, fish, and even human beings. The latter are always poorly drawn, though in many cases the drawing of the animals is excellent. In fact, when we glance over a collection of prehistoric representations of men and women we are reminded of nothing so much as of the scrawlings of small children attempting to represent their elders. Perhaps this curious difference is partly due to the fact that the "Life" is always a difficult stage of

artistic training, and partly to a purely superstitious reluctance to draw the human figure. Further, these human figures are often surmounted by what would appear to be animal heads, anthropoid in some cases—a fact which led to surmises now, in the light of fuller knowledge, dismissed. Lastly, there are the host of really wonderful drawings, paintings, and bas-reliefs, which have been found in caves, and form by far the most remarkable series of archæological discoveries of the past fifty years. The first discovery was made by a little girl who accompanied her father, a Spanish archæologist, to a cavern in Spain which he was investigating. His search was confined to the ground where he was seeking for implements, but at last, in response to his daughter's constant cry of "Toros! Toros!" he looked up, and lo! the whole ceiling of the cave was covered with pictures of bison in all sorts of attitudes. As usual, there was a certain amount of scepticism as to this discovery; but that has passed away in face of the numerous further discoveries made in other caves. The figures are sometimes drawn in black, sometimes in red and other colours—soot, ochre, and the like, having been used as pigments. Sometimes the representations of the animals have been modelled in high relief in clay; sometimes a suggestive boss or mass of stalagmite has been adapted to form part of a representation of the body of a beast of the period. As to the art displayed, it is not too much to say that the "Charging Boar," and many of the figures of bison and deer, are executed with a skill which most of us can only envy from a distance, and

which would do no discredit to a professional artist of to-day. It is even clear that there must have been what we may perhaps call Schools of Art; for the conventionalising of objects, such as the hand, cannot have come to pass without something of the nature of teaching. The most remarkable feature has been left for the last—namely, the situation of these drawings. If they had been intended purely for decorative purposes and to relieve the gloomy monotony of the caverns which were habitations, we should of course find them in such parts as were best supplied with light, and in which the cave-dwellers mostly abode. But this is contrary to the facts; for the pictures are generally in the darkest and most inaccessible parts of the caves, in places sometimes dangerous to reach. This sets us on the track of the solution of the problem of these pictures. Many other primitives besides those of the early Stone Age have made drawings, often quite similar to theirs, and fortunately we know their object in executing them. Nomad, primitive man is always more or less in danger of perishing by hunger. His meals depend on his success in the chase. We need not labour the dreadful alternative to success; it is easy to imagine; and those whose imagination works slowly will find harrowing accounts in the recitals of many travellers.

It is a widespread idea that if one can secure a picture or image of a man, he, therefore and thereupon, comes to be in our power. In a sense the image is the man, and if it is maltreated, he suffers. An ancient, a widespread and a most important superstition, it will be well to devote some con-

sideration to it. In Gaelic folklore it appears as the *corp craidhe*, or clay figure, and the mediæval necromancers, as readers of Dumas' work *La Reine Margot* will remember, used a model in wax which could be transfixcd with pins or set before the fire to melt, the person whom it represented either suffering severe pains in the spots injured, or in the second case wasting slowly away as the wax melted before the flames. That this superstition was taken very seriously we may learn from the first recorded trial for witchcraft in England; a trial which took place before the civil courts, for witchcraft was a crime against the Common and not the Ecclesiastical Law. When Leofric and Godifu, or Godiva, as she is more commonly called, gave one-half of what was then the poor village of Coventry to the Benedictines, they laid the seeds of many future quarrels between the inhabitants of the Prior's half and those of the Earl's half. Also with the officials on either side. At one point the quarrel between the Prior and the people living in the monastic half of the town was so acute that certain citizens of good standing visited a necromancer, described as a limb of Satan, one Master John de Nottingham, who lived in a tumble-down abode near by. Another person, Robert le Mareshall, who turned King's Evidence, declared that he had been living with the limb of Satan and was aware of the bargain entered into, which was that the said limb was to slay a variety of persons who had been annoying the citizens of standing, beginning with the King, Edward II. Passing downwards through the Prior himself, the list

ended with one Richard Sowe, apparently a servant at the Monastery who had rendered himself obnoxious, and on whom the first experiment was to be tried. Seven pounds of wax were provided and seven images representing the prospective victims were fashioned, one of them crowned with the royal crown so that there might be no mistake as to the person intended. The necromancer was invited to open his campaign by mischieving the unfortunate Sowe "to see what might be done with the rest." Certainly the limb showed that his powers were to be relied on, for "on the Friday before the Feast of the Holy Rood about midnight John de Nottingham gave his helper, Robert le Mareshall, a leaden bodkin with command to thrust it into the forehead of the figure of Richard Sowe. The effect was wellnigh instantaneous. When the necromancer sent Robert on the morrow to inquire how Richard did, the messenger found him crying 'Harrow!' and mad as mad could be. And on the Wednesday before the Ascension, John having on the previous Sunday removed the bodkin from the forehead of the figure and thrust it into its heart, Richard Sowe died."¹

Whatever view we may take of the story just narrated, there is clear evidence of the firm belief which existed in the efficacy of this form of black magic, and it is in its essence almost certainly what the prehistoric hunters were after in their pictures. In these we see the fatal arrows sticking into the

¹ I am indebted for this account to Miss Dormer Harris's *History of Coventry*, where the sequel of the story may be read.

carcasses of the animals represented, usually underneath, from which we are perhaps entitled to surmise that these early archers placed their shafts from below in the most vulnerable parts of the animals they had selected as their victims. The idea then underlying these pictures seems to be that the making of them and most probably the performance of magic ceremonies of some kind before them brought the animals into one's power and led to "good hunting." Hence the dark inaccessible parts of the caves were the domestic chapels, so to speak, of the day; and there, we may suppose, were carried out those magical ceremonies which were to ensure an ample supply of buffalo or other meat to the tribe or family living in that particular place. No doubt these rites were performed by men set aside for the purpose; in other words, there was a priestly caste, and its members were probably the teachers in the Schools of Art in which the neophytes were taught to represent the animals of the chase, as well as the proper rites with which to ensure their capture or destruction. Amongst these, no doubt, were ceremonial dances like the bison-dance of the North American Indians and similar sacred ceremonies of many another race. The Indians had their animal masks, which may be seen in all important museums; and here we come to the explanation of the curious heads surmounting the figures of human beings. They are the animal masks of the period. M. Mainage figures (for the first time, I think) a human being with the horns of a reindeer on his head, and its tail affixed to his girdle behind. He might be an Indian

medicine-man making "big medicine," and, whatever he called it, that is precisely what he was doing. In reference to this it is interesting to note as a parallel to this figure a series of objects found in a huge mound at Hopewell, Ohio, which was excavated some years ago by Professor Moorehead. Amongst other things was found part of a human skull surmounted by a large sheet of thin copper intended to be folded over the head, and carrying two imitation elk horns covered also with very thin sheet copper. Here was a head-dress quite like that of the prehistoric man, and, we may reasonably surmise, one which was constructed for use in a magic dance or other ceremony the object of which was to ensure success in the chase of the elk. The net result of an examination of the various and numerous works of art is to present us with a system of magic of a kind with which ethnologists have been familiar for centuries; in fact, since travellers first began to narrate the doings of primitive peoples. Let us make it quite clear that we are not withdrawing from these early men the sense of æsthetic emotion: that is too prevalent and too ingrained in the human species not to have been present at that period. But it was not the primary impulse. The mediæval carver who executed the miracles in stone which one finds, for example, in the ambulatory to the Chapter House at Southwell, took a delight in his work for art's sake; who can doubt it? But his primary object was a religious one, and so was that of the palæolithic man. Thus, in a sense, even then Art was the handmaid of Religion. Religion! But surely it was Magic,

and that is not religion? Let us look a little closely at this point. No doubt whatever that the palæolithic art was in large measure in the service of magic. Was magic, then, the parent of religion? It is the favourite theory with some. But such an explanation fails, because it is putting the cart before the horse. It entails, like other theories we have discussed, a primitive atheism, which does not fit in with the facts. Magic is mixed up with religion, for it is a disease of religion in perhaps all primitive societies, but it is not its parent. M. Mainage puts the matter well when he says, "*L'horizon de la magie est toujours débordé par l'horizon plus vaste de la vie religieuse.*" It was the same in mediæval times, when even at least outwardly devout persons had their doings with sorcerers for the promotion of their private ends. We will return to this matter; but let us first of all dismiss another question.

This naturalistic art, was it Totemistic? Was there a Totemistic strain in the religion of the period? We may give a decisive negative. Without attempting to grapple with the vast subject of Totemism, there is, at least, this one point about it as to which there can be no cavil: the totem is a personal object, personal to the individual or personal to the tribe. It is *his* crest or *their* badge and standard. Hence we should expect (and amongst modern primitives find) that the totem was rigidly limited to the person or tribe who owned it. We should no more expect to find a generally disseminated totem, or totems, than we should expect to find the lion and unicorn over

buildings in the United States or the double-headed eagle flaunting itself over French Mairies. An examination of the animal figures in relation to place of discovery shows that there is no such segregation in palæolithic times, and disposes of the totemistic idea.

Let us now return to magic as a disease of religion. Andrew Lang laid it down years ago that monotheism was subject to three debasing influences or diseases. The first of these he called Animism. It is a most unfortunate term, as it has been applied to more than one set of considerations. Lang thought of it under three aspects. First of all there was the attribution to spirits of an exclusive power over objects submitted to their influence; secondly, there was the cult of ancestors; and finally magic, namely, not an *appeal* to these powerful spirits to help in need, but an attempt to *compel* and *coerce* them to do so by means of spells. As to the second of these two, we have seen that it may be dismissed. But the other two forms seem clearly indicated in the case of the early primitives, and it is easy to see how they may have sprung from the social conditions of the moment, from the urgent need for food, and for good hunting to supply it.

The other two diseases of religion may rapidly be dismissed. Astral influences, so potent with many primitive races, do not seem to have touched palæolithic man. As to the vicissitudes of politics, whereby a victorious people has often taken over and, so to speak, subjugated to its own use the deities of another and conquered race, we have,

perhaps necessarily, no kind of evidence that any such thing happened in the early days of man, though, of course, we have none to show that it did not take place.

Lastly, we may ask whether, without undue rashness, we may draw any further conclusions, as to the religious views of the peoples we have been dealing with, from those of the primitives of to-day or of yesterday? It is a thorny subject, for very different opinions have been held as to what exactly are the beliefs even of the recent peoples alluded to. It must never be forgotten that these peoples are wholly unacquainted with psychology and probably have never thought out their beliefs. Nor, if they had, would they be capable of explaining them to persons of a different speech and a wholly different mode of thought. Nor, again, is it at all clear that they would always be willing, if able, to tell their sacred secrets to any casual inquirer, and this for many obvious reasons, notably for fear of ridicule. Hence, one must always examine with great care the statements put before us in ethnological works. There is no body of men in the past or to-day which has had such opportunities of acquiring information on such subjects as Catholic missionaries, and that admirable ethnological journal, *Anthropos*, exists largely to collect their valuable observations. Its editor is Dr. Schmidt, a recognised authority in ethnology; and his book, *L'Origine de l'Idée de Dieu*, is a classic on that subject. M. Mainage, another first-rate authority, summarises his colleague's views and comes to the conclusion, as

others have done, that monotheism is the primitive form of religion amongst all primitive races, and that we may say of the Supreme Being of such races, as both of these authors have said: "*Dieu n'est pas seulement Créateur: Il surveille et rétribue les actes des hommes, et c'est pourquoi dans l'immense majorité des cas, les lois ethniques sont référées formellement à l'Être Suprême.*" It is at least legitimate for us to conjecture, though we can never hope to prove it to demonstration, that such were also the views of the early people with whom we have dealt.

MITHRAS AND MITHRAISM¹

IN his most admirable little excursus on the Religion of Mithras,² Fr. Martindale regrets that he knows of "no English book which treats of Mithraism in a way which may satisfy, without misleading, the general reader." Possibly the translation of Cumont's³ smaller book had not at that time appeared. Mr. Paterson's book goes some way towards meeting this want, for it is a useful and scholarly work, although it relies rather too much on writings of authors like Loisy and Robertson, and does not seem to be aware of Catholic writers, such as Fr. Martindale. A study of this very interesting book in any case suggests that some useful information may be afforded to readers not merely as to Mithraism—though that will be the chief objective—but generally as to the kind of attack often made, and sometimes with great plausibility, on the Church from the point of view of the history of religions.

¹ *Mithraism and Christianity*, by L. Paterson, M.A., Vice-Principal of Chichester Theological College. Cambridge University Press, 1921.

² In *The History of Religions*, published by the Catholic Truth Society of England.

³ Every student of Mithraism or of Oriental pagan religions in Rome must now, and always, go to the works of this writer. *Textes et Monuments*, in two volumes, is the great work. *The Mystery of Mithra* is smaller and translated, as is *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*.

"The thing that has been that shall be." Time after time are revived the old fables as to the Church and its relations to earlier forms of faith; fables for the most part, though there is, as will be shown, always or often some vague fact on which the fable is hung. These are sometimes put forward by scholars very well acquainted with the facts of classical paganism but very imperfectly instructed in those of historic Christianity.

The classical statement—one constantly quoted—is that of Renan:¹ "If Christianity had been checked in its growth by some deadly disease, the world would have become Mithraic." Apart from the first part of the sentence, which is tantamount to saying: "If Christianity had not been Christianity," there is abundant other reason for saying that the prophecy or whatever one may call it, errs by its rashness. But it is in no way so absurd or unhistorical as the statement made by another writer, that "Christianity is only a sect of the Mithraists," perhaps one of the most absolutely wrong-headed utterances ever committed to print.²

Let us at once admit that Mithraism forms the high-water mark of the pagan religions. For this reason, if no other, it would be well worth some study. Whatever the relations between the two, and we shall examine into that matter farther on, there was a time in history when Mithraism was great and Christianity small—the mustard seed of the parable. "The pagan world of that [the

¹ In his *Marc Aurèle*.

² Dupuis, *Origine de tous les Cultes*, vol. ii, part ii, p. 203
See Paterson.

Antonine] age seems to have had little communication with the loftier faith which, within a century and a half from the death of Marcus Aurelius, was destined to seize the sceptre. To Juvenal, Tacitus, and Pliny, to Plutarch, Dion Chrysostom, Lucian, and Marcus Aurelius, the Church is hardly known, or known as an obscure offshoot of Judaism, a little sect, worshipping 'a crucified Sophist' in somewhat suspicious retirement or more favourably distinguished by simple-minded charity. The modern theologian can hardly be content to know as little of the great movement in the heathen world which prepared or deferred the victory of the Church."¹

There are three schools of thought in this matter of the history of religions, each with some measure of truth as its foundation. There is the Plagiaristic school, which believes that where similarities exist between any two religions, one has copied the other. The second school is the Psychological, which argues that the minds of men, being similarly constituted, reach similar conclusions when working on similar problems. There is some truth in this way of looking at things, and so there is in that of the third or Progressive school, which treats of religions in terms of what is called evolution. No one doubts that the Oriental religions, as will later be seen, *did* in some measure, even in considerable measure, prepare the way for the coming of Christianity, but that is not the same thing as the claim that Christianity is no more than a development from these earlier creeds—"a sect of

¹ Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. vii.

Mithraism " in fact. Holders of this position, for the most part, will have nothing to do with the idea of a revelation, primitive or otherwise. It is, as one of them has put it, a "puerile idea."

What are the data on which the very confident statements just quoted rest? It must be confessed, they are neither very numerous nor very convincing. Very unfortunately, from the antiquary's point of view, every book relating to the worship of pagan gods was destroyed as soon as Christianity became powerful enough to carry out its purpose. There must have been thousands of these books, and one would give a good deal to see them now, the two huge volumes on Mithraism which we know existed, for example. All the official information, so to speak, having vanished, we are thrown back upon two other sources: the allusions, sometimes copious and always valuable, to different pagan beliefs, in the non-religious and light literature of the period; and the denunciations of the early Christian writers—St Augustine, for example. Much is to be learned from the latter, though, no doubt, one has to remember that it is an enemy who is writing, and that he is not likely to take too favourable a view of his opponents' opinions and actions. Lastly, and perhaps most valuable of all sources of information, are the monuments in stone, of which quite a number have been discovered.

The Mithræa or temples of the sect were always underground, whether caves or crypts, and have thus, in many cases, escaped the destruction which has overtaken more ambitious buildings above

ground. The lapidary inscriptions, which suffer from the terseness of all such things, teach us some things of value, but the sculptured tablets are much more useful, although, also, much more puzzling. These consist usually of a central scene, almost always Mithras slaying the bull, an event to be described later on. Very often around this, and forming a kind of frame for it, are a series of compartments, each containing a minor sculpture representing something associated with Mithras. At least, so we suppose, for almost everything concerning these sculptures is matter for interpretation. Interpretations differ, and we are constantly confronted with the disquieting idea that, where our opinions are not supported by something in such literature as we possess, our interpretation of the sculptures may be miles away from the truth. From all this the reader will conclude that the study of these religions is not all smooth, solid ground, and will feel it wise when he comes to a sweeping statement to ask on what evidence it is based.

Before examining Mithraism, we will briefly consider the religious history of Rome up to the time of its introduction. The old religion of Rome, which cannot here be discussed, according to Dill,¹ "along with much that was sound and grave and fortifying to character, was also cold and hard and ceremonial. It could mould and consecrate a militant and conquering State; it did little to satisfy the craving for moral regeneration or communion with a Higher Power. It could not appease the sense of error and frailty by ghostly

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 554.

comfort and sacramental absolution. It was, moreover, wanting in that warmth and sympathy, linking the human and the Divine." Hence, as we learn from indisputable evidence, at the time of the fall of the Republic, religion in Rome was practically extinct and most of the temples falling into ruin. Now a religion of some kind all peoples must have, and, if they cannot attain to knowledge of the truth, they will fasten upon the nearest and most fascinating form of faith at hand. If any person doubts this statement, let him cast his eye on the religious state of the world from the time when the War commenced down to the present day. The progress of Spiritualism, so-called, for example, is evidence for this statement.

Into a population, rid of its old religion and ready for a new one, poured the religious, as well as many other, influences from the Orient, brought in by merchants, by alien legionaries, above all, perhaps, by slaves, many of whom, it must be remembered, were highly educated—indeed, in this respect, often greatly the superiors of their owners. All these religions of the Orient introduced to Rome two new religious ideas according to Cumont:¹ "Mysterious methods of purification, by which they claimed to wash away the impurities of the soul, and the assurance that a blessed immortality would be the reward of piety." Thus they supplied two factors in which the old religion was deficient. The worship of Cybele, which came from Asia Minor, was the first to arrive. Her

¹ *Oriental Religions*, p. 9.

symbol,¹ the black meteoric stone of the Magna Mater, was brought from Pessinus to Ostia and afterwards to Rome in 204 B.C. The religion itself did not actually become naturalised for a number of years to come, but it was there and exercising its influence, afterwards to become much greater. Egypt, later on, supplied the worship of Isis and Serapis, and the former, if we are to judge from statuary representations, was a much more gracious, sweeter, and more seductive goddess than the stern Mother of the Gods. Moreover, from the contemporary accounts we learn that initiates did really go through a genuine spiritual crisis.²

Both of these alien religions, if not in essence obscene, became tainted with indecencies and excesses which must have disgusted those who entered them with a genuine longing for a spiritual life, and such undoubtedly there must have been. Upon these followed a swarm of Baals from various parts of the Empire. The best known of these is Jupiter Dolichenus, whose memorials have been found all over the Empire, even in distant Britain, yet who was in origin only the local Baal of Doliche, a small town in Commagene, a province of Asia Minor near Cappadocia.

To all of these religions succeeded the worship of Mithras, an Indo-Persian faith. It was a part of Mazdaism, the worship of Ahura Mazda, a sky

¹ Or according to some eminent authorities the very goddess herself.

² See the delightful and close reproduction of the classical account given by Fr. Martindale in a story, called "God's Orphan," in his *In God's Nursery*.

divinity as Zeus and Jupiter had originally been. In the hierarchy of this religion, below Ahura came certain deified abstractions, and still lower, spirits of nature amongst whom was Mithras, the pure genius of light. He was not the actual sun: there was a clear distinction drawn here which reminds one of an Egyptian instance of a similar kind. That people had a sun-god, Ra or Re, worshipped in many places. There arose a king, Amenophis IV (who afterwards changed his name to Akhenaton), who endeavoured to introduce a rigid monotheism in the shape of the worship of the sun's disc. Despite the apparent close similarity between this and the old sun-worship, this religion never took root; was denounced as heresy and rapidly died out. Mithras was the light at mid-day when it is strongest. In the sculptures (and apparently the same two figures were placed on either side of the temples) he is accompanied by two Dadophori or torch-bearers, Cauti and Cauto-pati. One, with flaming torch held upwards, typifies the dawn and stands on Mithra's right hand. On his left, the other, with torch turned downwards, represents the sunset.

The story of Mithras' birth is in accordance with his solar origin, for he is fabled to have sprung from a rock, in other words the firmament regarded as a solid structure. In Egypt it was a roof of iron, supported on four great pillars; in other lands it was of stone. Mithraism was the soldiers' religion, and wherever they went their religion went with them, so that Mithræa are to be found from the Sahara to the Wall in North Britain, which was

the *Finis Imperii*. Maps giving the sites of such buildings as have been so far laid bare, show how numerous and widespread they were, but as no Mithræum could contain more than about one hundred persons, the existence of numerous temples in one place does not mean very much. For example, Ostia was a very important seaport town. It contained at least six such temples, but after all that need only indicate six hundred adherents as a maximum.

The spread and rapid progress of Mithraism may, in some measure, have depended upon its supplying some of those factors which were absent from the old religion. M. Cumont thinks, however, that there was another and more important reason for the popularity of this particular creed. It was firmly founded on dualism; that is to say, there were both good and evil principles, and both were deified and to be worshipped. Thus was offered an answer to that crux of all theologies, the origin of evil, which could, and did, appeal to cultured as well as uncultured. That the evil deity was to be struggled against and eventually conquered, imparted a certain virility to the religion and, no doubt, commended it to the legionaries of the Empire who, being constantly engaged in earthly warfare, were well able to imagine one of a spiritual character. Thus the religion had many characteristics making for success, and for a time it did succeed. Yet to-day it is, as it has been for many centuries, a mere archæological curiosity. How is this and what was the cause of its failure?

In the first place, Mithraism appears to have

completely excluded women from its services. The female counterpart of the male Mithraist seems to have been relegated to the worship of Cybele. Now, it seems perfectly obvious that any religion which excludes the devout female sex can neither be true nor have any lasting measure of success. This fact alone would seem to negative Renan's confident statement. But there was another and most potent reason for its failure. Here let it be understood that we are writing of Mithraism and Christianity from the purely historical point of view, and without any kind of reference to the Divine origin of the latter. Dill, who speaks quite tenderly of Mithraism, says it "is perhaps the highest and most striking example of the last efforts of paganism to reconcile itself to the great moral and spiritual movement which was setting steadily, and with growing momentum, toward purer conceptions of God, of man's relations to him, and of the life to come." And, he continues, "it is also the greatest effort of syncretism to absorb, without extinguishing, the gods of the classic pantheon in a cult which was almost monotheistic, to transform old forms of nature worship and cosmic symbolism into a system which should provide at once some form of moral discipline and real satisfaction for spiritual wants."

Syncretism—the absorption into the new of all or most of the features of the old faith—that was what was at the core of all the religions of the Rome of the Empire. It made no matter how many gods or godlets a man worshipped. The Roman who adored, say, thirty-nine, had no com-

ments to make on his neighbour who added a fortieth, perhaps in the person of Mithras. There was only one non-syncretic religion, and that was Christianity, and it was the victor. The believer in Mithras or in Jupiter Dolichenus, or in both, with his syncretic ideas had no sort of difficulty in also worshipping the divinity of the Emperor when that became the recognised State religion. The Christian refused to do so, and, no doubt, the non-Christian Roman, with his bundle of deities, looked upon the Christian not only as a disloyal person, but also as a sort of fool—fit provender for the lions. *Prima facie*, it would have seemed certain that the easy, convenient, syncretic religion would gain the victory. But it was the non-syncretic which won. Dill and Cumont both agree that the syncretic character of Mithraism was its destruction. It could not free itself from the obscene and foolish fables attached to the religions whose tenets it had more or less absorbed. And so it failed to satisfy that desire for a religion pure and undefiled which was growing rapidly. Harnack thought that the failure of Mithraism to capture Hellenic thought was a main feature in its fall. Others have pointed to the severe persecution to which it was in later days subjected, but if persecution could kill a religion, there would be no Christianity to-day.

We have seen that there is more than a tendency in some writings to place Mithraism on a plane considerably higher than it would appear to deserve. The more it is exalted—though this is a point which seems to have passed unobserved

by these writers—the greater the success of Christianity in vanquishing it. This, from a purely human point of view. In fact, from this point of view alone surely we may demand some reply to the question as to why Mithraism, with apparently so much in its favour, is an archæological curiosity to-day, and Christianity, with apparently everything against it, is the greatest factor in modern civilisation. No doubt there is one way of getting out of this difficulty by the old formula, “*plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.*” “Christianity is a sect of Mithraism”—*voilà tout!* If few would imitate the foolish temerity of the coiner of that phrase, there are many so-called historians to-day who would claim that all religions are syntheses and that Christianity, as the last of them, is the master-synthesis of them all. No doubt Christianity *did* make use of such items in earlier faiths as she thought might be serviceable. The early Christian writers—*e.g.*, St Augustine—frankly admit this. “But in borrowing, it transfigured them. In all that was essential, the Church would hold no truce with paganism,” says Dill, certainly an unprejudiced and well-instructed authority.¹

Christianity was a sect of Mithraism or at least borrowed some of its most important features from that form of belief. That is the statement we have to examine. In order to do so thoroughly it will be necessary to take each of the points relied upon and see what its real bearings are.

I. *The Birth of Mithras.*—There is an obscure tradition from Armenia that Mithras had a virgin

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 625.

birth. It conflicts with the legend—much more probable and apparently much earlier—of his birth from a rock. It is not heard of until the *fifth century after Christ*, so that if there is borrowing, the presumption is all the other way. And, finally, when carefully examined, as Paterson¹ shows, the tradition recounts a form of virgin birth—if indeed that is at all a correct term—which only by an unwarrantable stretch of words can be brought to anything like the meaning attached to them by Christian writers. There is nothing in this, and we may pass to another and more picturesque feature. According to some authorities, the birth of Mithras was observed by adoring shepherds. What is the evidence for this? Out of a considerable number of sculptured slabs, seven exhibit figures in compartments of the frame which, from their relation to sheep or goats, would appear to be shepherds. Let it be noted they are never in the same compartment with the figure of Mithras nor are they ever in the attitude of adoration. In fact, we can feel quite sure that had there been no mention of anything of the kind in the Gospel narrative, we should never have heard a word about this story in connection with Mithras, and some other tale would have been invented to account for the shepherds. M. Cumont thinks the incident may have been borrowed from Christianity. Perhaps it may.

If the legend, as it seems to be, is original, that there were no men until Mithras created them, it is clear that the shepherds cannot have been present

¹ P. 13.

at his birth in adoration or otherwise. Here is an excellent example of the difficulties previously alluded to which arise from the necessity of attempting the interpretation of sculptured scenes, as to which we have no literary information. In connection with this, it may be mentioned that two writers¹ have actually argued that the visit of the Wise Men to the infant Christ was copied from a visit known to have been paid in A.D. 66 (note the date!) to Nero by Tiridates, King of Armenia, with attendant magi. We need not waste time over wild imaginings of this kind, the fruit, it would appear, of minds which must find some new explanation of Biblical occurrences at all cost, even of common sense.

The last point in this connection is more worthy of consideration. Mithras' birthday was ultimately fixed on December 25: is not the inference irresistible? This is a point on which it is difficult to speak with any assurance. There is no doubt that the day of the winter solstice was that selected by all solar cults for celebrating *Natalis Invicti Solis*—the birthday of the Unconquered Sun, which on that day began to reverse the period of decline, which had commenced with the summer solstice.

¹ Réville and Dieterich (see Paterson, p. 15), though I think Soltau preceded them in making this not very useful suggestion. The story of the visit is in Pliny and Dio Cassius. If Zahn's date of A.D. 62 for the Aramaic original of the Gospel of St Matthew is to be accepted, then, naturally, the story falls utterly to the ground. And at any of the dates assigned to-day to that Gospel, which are not very distant from that mentioned, the attempt to connect the two things seems perfectly futile.

Thus it became the birthday of Mithras. But why was it selected as the official day for commemorating the birth of our Lord? In our complete ignorance of how it came to be selected, for, of course, no one supposes or has ever supposed that it was his actual birthday, it is better frankly to say that we cannot answer the question. We do not know whether the choice came from the East or from the West. It does not appear to have been known as the festival of the Nativity in Rome before A.D. 354 or in Constantinople before A.D. 379. All that Fr. Martindale, in his learned article on the subject in the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, feels inclined to say as to the Christian choice of that day, is that "the same instinct which set *Natalis Invicti* at the winter solstice, will have sufficed, apart from deliberate adaptation or curious calculation, to set the Christian feast there too." It may have been a case of "spoiling the Egyptians" or it may not.

II. *Titles*.—Mithras is invoked as "the incarnate Word," which is certainly reminiscent of Scripture phraseology. But, as Paterson¹ points out, the term is used in the same sect for others, even for an ordinary priest, and thus loses all the significance which it might otherwise have been claimed to possess. "Mediator," another term employed with regard to Mithras, had, says the same authority, at first a physical or astronomical significance, since its possessor occupied a middle place between light and darkness, heaven and hell. But it also obtained a theological meaning when

¹ P. 17.

he became a mediator "between the unknowable and inaccessible god and the human race," which is a conception in every way foreign to that of Christianity in its use of the same term.

III. Amongst what Dill calls the "futile" attempts to associate Mithraism and Christianity, none is more prominent nor, it may be added, more futile than that connected with *The Slaying of the Bull*. It is perfectly clear from the monuments that this was the central fact of Mithraic worship. The legend relates that the bull was the first animal created by Ahura. Mithras overthrew it and, after dragging it to his cave, killed it by thrusting a knife above its shoulder. This is the action represented in the sculptures where Mithras, with a Phrygian cap on his head, stands astride over the bull which he has just stabbed, whilst Cauti and Cautopati, with an air of complete indifference on their countenances, stand on either side. In one case, instead of blood, corn is seen emerging from the wound, symbolic of the belief that the slaying of the bull was the regeneration of vegetation. In the picture, also, are often noxious animals sent by Ahriman, the evil deity, for the purpose of drinking the blood and thus preventing the return of vegetation.

It will scarcely be credited that, as Dill puts it,¹ to certain writers this "mystic sacrifice of the bull . . . seemed to occupy the same space in Mithraic devotion as the Sacrifice on Calvary." In further extension of the comparison here suggested, but actually made by others, another writer compares

¹ P. 622.

the dragging of the bull to the cave with the Way of the Cross. Well may Sir Samuel Dill, who is a scholar and a man of judgement, as we have just said, speak of the "futile attempts [which] have been made to find parallels to Biblical narrative or symbolism in the faint and faded legend of Mithras recovered from his monuments."

IV. *The Taurobolium*.—There is some doubt as to whether this disgusting ceremony, dealt with in another essay, was associated with the Mithraic worship as well as that of the Magna Mater with which it was originally introduced. Some authorities stand for one, others for the second theory.¹ One inscription at least seems to prove that there was a connection. This baptism of blood, from which the participant emerged *renatus in æternum* has also been put forward as the forerunner, and even the origin of various Christian ideas to which we need not more particularly advert. The last *Taurobolium* of which we have lapidary evidence took place on the spot now occupied by St Peter's at Rome. There is about as much connection between the *Taurobolium* and Christianity as there is between these two facts.

V. *Sacraments*.—What are called, perhaps by some abuse of language, the sacraments of Mithraism, demand some attention, since some of the wildest theories concerning the relationship of this religion to Christianity have been built upon them. First of all, there is baptism. It is undoubted that the initiates of Mithraism, like the initiates of Isis and of other faiths, did undergo

¹ See Paterson, p. 30, note 4.

ceremonial and symbolic washings. The idea is perfectly simple, perfectly natural, and likely to occur to various persons without necessary copying. To enter the portals of religion one should be clean of soul. The body is cleansed by water, and this external washing typifies the internal purification. Such was the pagan theory. And with perfect logic it was felt that these purifications could not be too frequently renewed. So we are told that Ahura Mazda ordered that neophytes should wash their bodies for three nights and three days. That there is a superficial resemblance between the general action and Christian baptism, is shown by the fact that Tertullian and other writers comment on and compare the two ceremonies. But the underlying idea of Christian baptism—a ceremony which can never be repeated, whilst the pagan lustrations must be—is quite different from the Mithraic ceremony, though, no doubt, the idea of purification exists in both.

The Mithraic feast, in like manner, has been associated with the Eucharist, and here we meet with some of the wildest statements of all. In this feast small cakes marked with a cross and the juice of some tree, called *haoma*, appear to have been partaken of. Afterwards, in the West, wine was used when *haoma* was unobtainable. What was the exact significance we do not know, but probably it was like the *agapè* or feasts of love or friendship associated with other religions. The little loaves, on account of the cross marked upon them, have been associated with our altar-breads by those who ignore the fact that all sorts of cakes,

including the hot cross bun, are notched in this way and probably have been from the time that cakes were first made, for the very obvious purpose of enabling them readily to be broken up into bits. It is like the perforated intervals between postage stamps in sheets, for which, no doubt, some occult and unnecessary explanation would have been found had they been objects of antiquity.

Another writer, ignoring the settled judgement of scholars as to the origin of the word "Mass" (the religious ceremony, of course, is meant) tells us that it was derived from this round cake of the Mithraic feast, which was called Mizd or Myazd. As to the ceremony as a whole, no doubt there is a superficial resemblance between it and the Mass which commemorates the Last Supper—also a feast. Tertullian and Justin Martyr both denounce the Mithraic feast as a diabolic imitation. Such, no doubt, it appeared to them, but in all probability it was nothing of the kind, but just a love feast like many others, even perhaps like the mythical feast of the dead, represented on so many tombstones and partaken of symbolically by all Romans at the graves of their relatives. Of course, there are those who would have us believe that the Mass is nothing more than a copy or descendant of this feast. Christianity, again, "is a sect of Mithraism." Paterson very shrewdly points out that one body would hardly copy deliberately the practices of another and then pour abuse on that body as the copyist, nor, we may add, is it likely that such a process could have been successful in the times as they were.

It is extraordinary how little attempt is made by writers of this kind to put themselves into the time of which they write. The Canon of the Mass, as we have it, is, by general consent of scholars, of apostolic or early post-apostolic time. The Church was then in the Catacombs, celebrating Mass much as it is now celebrated. Mithraism was an important religion smiled on by the powers that were, who were, at the same time, doing their best to exterminate the weaker faith. In the long run, that apparently weaker faith won. Why, if Christianity was a copy of Mithraism—a mere sect of that faith—and its central ceremony nothing more than a copy of the love feast of Mithras—why, if this be true, did the Christians find it necessary to betake themselves to the Catacombs at all? Why undergo persecution whilst the religion of which they were only a sect was basking in official smiles, or at least pursuing an unpersecuted career? To the writers of the period, Christianity was an obscure offshoot of Judaism, and there is not a single word as to any relationship with Mithras. That was left to latter-day writers to discover, as well as that marvellous mare's-nest which ascribes the origin of the Eucharist to St Paul's studies in Tarsus¹ of Mithraism and its doings. Paterson says that "Professor Percy Gardner suggests that St Paul was influenced by the Eleusinian mysteries,² and that his account of the Last Supper was one of his ecstatic revelations. Mr. J. M. Robertson argues that St Paul was

¹ P. 54.

² *Origin of the Lord's Supper*, 1893.

“practising a supper of which he had no Jesuine record.”¹ And Paterson very properly adds: “But even if St Paul was not dependent on apostolic information, either of St Peter or St James,² it is difficult to believe that he concocted the Christian rite out of his own head with a few heathen ideas.”

It is indeed! Further, it is not explained to us how St Paul, born out of due time, as he tells us himself, after inventing this wholly new thing, was able to persuade the other Apostles that it was part of the teaching of their Lord, so that they and the whole Church were practising it within a few years. St Paul, no doubt, was a forceful personage, but so, after his conversion, was St Peter, and surely this tale is more incredible than any of Munchausen's adventures. There seems to be no end to these ingenious *deliramenta*. A much more likely result of St Paul's knowledge of Mithraism and its ways and of the Eleusinian mysteries, as Paterson again points out, is that he was warning Christians against them when he told them that they could not drink the cup of the Lord and that of devils, nor sit at both of their tables. After all, St Paul is not our only authority for the institution of the Blessed Sacrament.

Confirmation, so some have suggested, derives the signing with the holy oil from the fact that at the initiation into one of the grades of which we have shortly to speak, the neophyte was branded on the forehead with a hot iron. The originator of

¹ *Religious Systems of the World*, p. 209.

² Gal. i 18, 19.

this suggestion may be complimented on his ingenuity rather than his sense of humour.

VI. *Grades in Mithraism*.—There was a graded system in Mithraism: of that there is no doubt, for St Jerome gives an account of it with the names of the grades, which are quite interesting. But except that there are seven "Orders," major and minor, in the Catholic Church, and seven grades in Mithraism, there is no other connection. Seven was possibly chosen by both as the perfect number. To an outsider, there is much more likeness to the grades in Masonry and other secret societies. Indeed, Kipling in his tale¹ has used a novelist's licence to introduce secret signs which, of course, may have existed, though history knows nothing of them. In this connection, it may be mentioned that the spirit of fraternity inculcated by Mithraism was within the brotherhood as with Masonry, and not for all mankind as taught by Christianity. It is one of the ways in which the Ethics of this religion differed from those of the Christian faith.

¹ By the way, Mr. Kipling makes his hero a "Griffin," that being what was supposed, at the time that his book was written, to be the Second Degree. It is now known that the word once read "Gryphius" should be "Cryphius," or the "Concealed One." As a matter of fact, it is much more likely that the Roman officer would have been a "Leo," since that, the Third Degree, was the position usually attained by soldiers, and the lions on the tombstones of various dead legionaries which have been found in Britain are believed to testify to this fact.

In this connection it may be remembered that one of the tales in the late Mgr. Benson's *Mirror of Shalott* has the Mithraic worship as its underlying feature.

Mithraism taught rigid adherence to the truth, and urged abstinence and continence; indeed, it was distinguished from Oriental religions in general by the purity of its adherents, or at least the purity enjoined upon them. Yet Fr. Martindale says of it, and he is an authority on the subject, "in no case have we evidence of a true code or system of ethics, or any trace (historically verifiable) of moral effort or ideal which can bear any relation to the Christian, save that of a will-o'-the-wisp to the noonday sun."

This observation, we think, is the high-water mark of what may be said, with any truth, of all the alleged resemblances.

ASTROLOGY

THE fine phrase of Wordsworth in which he exclaimed that he would "rather be a pagan suckled in some creed outworn" than find himself delivered over to a wholly materialistic view of existence is known to every reader and finds an echo in almost every heart. Man is made for God, and if he fails to find him in his true Church, he will run, as people to-day are running, *amok* amongst strange, unsatisfactory delusions such as Spiritualism, Theosophy, Christian Science, all of them ancient things which disappear sometimes for a period, only to re-emerge and for a time lead foolish people captive. Except the last, the wash of these things is usually from East to West, and, with the same exception, most of them possess at least some semblance of a coherent philosophy.

Since the War stirred up the sluggish stream of popular thought, there has been a recrudescence of these vagaries, and amongst them and by no means the least of them, astrology, whose motto, if its history be carefully examined, might well be the old adage, "*Expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.*" There is this remarkable fact about astrology, that, unlike any of the other systems mentioned, it had a day when it even enslaved Christian nations and Popes in its toils. Nor has even that day com-

pletely passed, for it is definitely stated that the late Marquis of Bute—a sound scholar and a firm Catholic, the original as a young man of Disraeli's *Lothair*—attached real significance to horoscopes and other astrological methods. Lest it should be suggested that this was due to the superstitious nature engendered by the Catholic Church, let us add that, as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* informs us, no less a person than the late Dr. Richard Garnett, of the British Museum, never suspected of any Romeward leanings, under the pseudonym of "A. G. Trent" wrote a book in favour of astromancy, which he maintained was not fortune-telling but a "physical science just as much as geology."

The history of such a subject is worth a little consideration, and especially that part of it which relates to the rise and fall of astrology in Catholic Europe, for, as hinted above, there was a time when all Europe—Protestant, by the way, as well as Catholic—was a prey to astrologers and their divinations.

Except in occult circles, to-day astrology is the shadow of astronomy as alchemy is that of chemistry, though in those circles the former is in active practice, and perhaps not the latter. In earlier ages of history, and even in the early times of Christianity, there was no real distinction between the two studies of astronomy and astrology.

The first person apparently to draw the distinction which obtains to-day was that singular genius St Isidore of Seville (of which place he became

Archbishop in 594), the encyclopædia of the knowledge, and necessarily therefore also of the ignorance, of his day. Later on in the twelfth century John of Salisbury (known as *Johannes Parvus*), Secretary to Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury and subsequently intimate friend of St Thomas of that same see, one of the greatest thinkers of his or any day, drew a very clear distinction between Mathēsis, the legitimate study and Mathēsis the illegitimate, but it must be admitted that a distinction which depends upon the quantity of one syllable is one which cannot make great appeal except to the scholar. Other early Fathers attributed the origin of true astronomy to Abraham and to good angels, whilst they assigned to Cham the rôle of introducing its counterpart, astrology.

From all this it follows that it is impossible to say which was the earlier of the two to be studied, for it was only after mankind had stared for years at the starry firmament that any distinction was made between the courses of the heavenly bodies and their influence on mankind in particular and on individuals according to the moments of their births.

Kant said that the starry heavens above and the moral law within were the two things which most stirred his wonder, and there is little to cause surprise in the influence which the sight of the sky on a clear night must have exercised on the minds of early races of mankind. It is a curious fact that, so far at least as the cave pictures and other artistic manifestations of prehistoric man go, there is no evidence, amongst those of his beliefs

discussed in another essay, that he was in any way influenced by the heavenly bodies. But that astrology was in operation in Babylon three thousand years before Christ is quite certain, and perhaps we owe the early stages to that people, for it was certainly by the Chaldeans, the priestly caste of Babylon, that astrology was afterwards carried to Western countries. To these early peoples the firmament was a spacious, fully inhabited place. We all of us recognise the Great Bear or Plough, or Charles's Wain, and Orion, and Cassiopeia's Chair, and there the constellations end for most of us. But if one looks at a celestial globe—which object seems to be rarer to-day than it was fifty years ago—one sees Perseus and Andromeda, Hercules and a host of other constellations named after heroes and heroines fabled to have once walked this earth.

Moreover, the planets themselves, whose ancient names we preserve, had their intimate relationship not only with colours, but with metals and even with portions of the human body. Thus, Saturn was associated with grey, with lead, and with the right ear. Jupiter's colour was white and his metal electrum, by which was meant an amalgam of gold and silver, thought in early days to be an independent metal. Mars was, of course, from his recognisable colour associated with scarlet, and he interested himself in the human bile and the blood, and, as a final trifle, in the left ear.

Venus was accorded yellow as a colour, and was encharged with the care of the loins and lower limbs. The sun naturally was associated with the

metal gold, and equally naturally the moon with silver. But, for what arbitrary reason is unknown, the sun was interested in man's right eye and woman's left, and the moon in man's left eye and woman's right.

When we are estimating the various relations between the stars and men we must by no means forget the Chaldeo-Persian doctrine that the souls of men were brought down from celestial heights by bitter necessity to inhabit the bodies of men. As they descended, they traversed each planet, and from each received a certain quality. There is much similarity between that view and Plato's, though in his theory the rational soul, after its creation by a Demiurge, inhabited a star, and, if it had contented itself, might have continued to live there in permanent contemplation of ideas. But it was filled with a desire for the world of sense, and was imprisoned in a body from which it might return to its start if it succeeded in getting the better of the lower side of its nature. Otherwise it must go still lower through the bodies of animals.

It is certainly not wonderful that with beliefs like these prevalent, it should appear to men that the planets had an influence on their lives. From that idea sprang the whole complicated system of judicial astrology or the casting of horoscopes, a business of extreme complexity depending in its essence on the setting down first of all of the exact moment of birth of the individual who was concerned, and then the determination of the positions in the heavens, and with regard to the Zodiac and

one another, of such of the heavenly bodies as were believed to affect the lives and doings of mankind. The reader who is curious to know more may be referred to any encyclopædia. Astrology commenced, as we have seen, in all probability in Babylon and there spread to Egypt, and to a less extent to India, where it still holds its place, and horoscopes depicted on dried leaves may be seen in museums. According to Jastrow, it was in the fourth century before Christ that it began its triumphant journey westwards. As it travelled it caught hold of other faiths or was incorporated into them; Mithraism, that ubiquitous religion of the Empire, for example.

In Rome itself astrology and its adepts became so rampant, and in the eyes of the authorities so dangerous, that in 139 B.C., by order of the Prætor, every astrologer was expelled from Italy. They crept in again, for, somewhat later of course, Cicero in his *De Divinatione* denounced astrology, and that in spite of the fact that his tutor, Posidonius, was a distinguished exponent of that art. The people seem to have demanded it, and they got it. Christianity, when it arose, took a firm stand against this superstition, and one Aquila Ponticus, noted for his mathematical skill, was actually expelled from the infant Church in or about the year 120, for astrological heresies. And when Constantine had embraced Christianity he, too, took up arms against astrology, and expelled from Italy all magi and Chaldeans and their followers, the penalty for remaining being death.

After this for eight centuries Christian Europe

was free from astrology, though not Europe as a whole, for it never died out in Moslem Spain.

There was a seamy side to this legislation, which was that, tied together as the two subjects were, the ban upon astrology seems undoubtedly to have caused a serious decline in the study of the legitimate science of astronomy.

But the exile was to return, and in greater power than ever. Al Mansur, the mighty though treacherous caliph who built Bagdad, attracted to his capital many learned men, chiefly Jews, of whom some had acquired from Arab sources a deep knowledge of astrology. Then came the great upheaval of the Crusades, bringing with them a greater acquaintance on the part of Christian Europe with the thought of the Moslem world, and leading up not only to the absorption of the Aristotelian philosophy but to the recrudescence of astrology, which, once let loose again on Europe, poured over that part of the world like a flood. This remarkable progress brought about once more conditions similar to those experienced in pagan Rome. For, just as at the earlier period, astrologers were everywhere; and everywhere of the first importance. Royal personages had their Court astrologers, on whose advice they relied implicitly. Angelo Catto was astrologer to the narrow-minded, perfidious, and superstitious Louis XI of France; but a still more eminent professor was Michael de Nostredame, better known as Nostradamus, astrologer to Catherine de Medici, of a family which had opened its arms to astrology. For him

she erected a tower outside Paris, where they consulted the stars night after night. Nostradamus died in 1566, having published a book of prophecies in rhyme called *Centuries*, which two hundred years after his death was condemned at Rome.

There were Imperial and Papal astrologers, and neither Emperor nor Pope decided on the day on which ambassadors were to be received until that day had been approved of by an inspection of the stars.

Florence was the first city to appoint a municipal astrologer, as towns now appoint and pay Medical Officers of Health, and the first occupant of the position was Guido Bonatti, of whom more anon, placed by Dante in the eighth circle of the Inferno together with Michael Scot, another celebrated wizard and astrologer, buried according to local tradition, which another Scott enshrined in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," at Melrose Abbey. The Universities, many of them, instituted chairs of astrology as well as of the more legitimate science. Nor were these astrologers undistinguished and unknown persons, for Kepler and Tycho Brahe both drew horoscopes with the best of them, as well as contributing vastly to the knowledge of the heavens. Let it be remembered that both of these persons were Protestants, and that Melancthon, a leading Reformer, was also a strong supporter of the astrologers, so that Catholicism in the period referred to had no monopoly of the subject.

The position is certainly anomalous and deserving of study, and has been very carefully treated

in a learned work to which we are indebted for much information.¹

We have seen what the opinions and actions of the early Church were on this topic, and we may learn from the *De Civitate Dei* what were the opinions of St Augustine, who denounced astrology as unbecfitting to Christians, yet in whose writings, by a strange irony of fate, were to be found the very words which opened the door to the mediæval flood of horoscopes and the like. Long after St Augustine, John of Salisbury, of whom we have already spoken, expressed the same opinions; and still later, in the thirteenth century, Alexander of Hales—so greatly praised by St Thomas Aquinas and even by Francis Bacon (no diffuse distributor of praise)—denounced the casting of nativities as a superstitious art. Yet it is not so many years afterwards that we find astrology, including the casting of nativities, in full blast all over Christendom, including Rome.

Let us study history and endeavour to find the explanation of this curious anomaly. From the Arabs came in overwhelming measure the knowledge of Aristotle and his teachings, and with that and other Arab learning entered once more the astrologer and his horoscopes.

Blessed Albertus Magnus and his pupil St Thomas Aquinas, confronted with the task of reducing Aristotle to a Christian denominator and producing a Christian philosophy on Aristotelian

¹ *The Mediæval Attitude toward Astrology*, by Dr. T. O. Wedel, Instructor in English in Yale University. Published in 1922 by the Press of that University.

lines, had, amongst many other things, to deal with the question of the heavenly bodies and, in connection therewith, of their influence upon human beings and their destinies.

Let us note two points in relation to this. First of all, that Christian philosophy up to the time of St Thomas had been dominated by the teachings of St Augustine, the greatest and most influential Father of the Western Church, and that he was a man saturated with Platonism. His views, in fact, might be described as those of Plato Christianised. Then, again, the influence of the Ptolemaic explanation of the universe then, and for many subsequent years, held the field. Such was the environment.

St Thomas very fully considered and discussed the problem of the heavens and the motion of the planets. If, he said, the heavenly bodies are animated, then their "souls" are to be numbered amongst the angels. But he further tells us, when he comes to consider the question as to whether the bodies in question actually are animated, that the Doctors of the Church hold diverse opinions; that we do not know—did not at that date, at any rate—whether they are animated or not; and that, whichever solution is reached is of no consequence to the Church, since the faith is not touched either way. Of course, in regard to the relation of the planets and other heavenly bodies to the earth his knowledge, or rather ignorance, was that of his period.

A very little thought expended on this question of horoscopes will at once reveal the point from

which danger was expected. If it is really the case that all the doings of a man are determined for him by the positions of the planets at the instant of his birth, then there can be no such thing as free-will, and, if free-will goes by the board, so too, and at the same moment, does all morality, since it is obvious that morality and crime are mere words where every action of a man's life is necessary and uncontrollable by himself. Many writers on astrology, especially those who were non-Catholics, fully admitted this fact. It was this very reason, for example, which so commended astrology to the fatalistic Oriental Manilius, the poet of the subject and author of the line which sums up this philosophy: "*Fata regunt orbem, certa stant omnia lege*" (Fate rules the world, and all things are determined by law): if this be true, there is an end to religion. In the heyday of astrology there were even within the Church writers who went too far in this matter, and amongst them was Francesco degli Stabili, commonly called (as by Dr. Wedel) Cecco d'Ascoli, who in 1327 and in his seventieth year was burnt at the stake on this very account, as Dr. Wedel believes. Cecco was an enthusiast and is credited with being the author of the statement that "a physician without astrology is like an eye without vision," which throws a vivid light on the way in which the pseudo-science had permeated all walks of life.

Dr. Wedel says that Cecco's "death forms an almost isolated instance in the history of the Inquisition," and certainly neither Roger Bacon, who appears to have gone almost dangerously far along

the same road, nor Guido Bonatti, already alluded to, who, again, at least by implication, seems clearly to have denied free-will, suffered any penalty from the Inquisition.

The explanation of our difficulty, it seems, is to be found in the consideration and interpretation of some passages of St Augustine. That Doctor of the Church tells us in the seventh Book of his *Confessions* that he had rejected the "lying divinations and impious dotages of the astrologers"; and in the *De Civitate Dei*, after demolishing the same body of men, he concludes: "All these things considered, we have good reason to believe that, when the astrologers give very wonderful answers, it is to be attributed to the occult inspiration of spirits, not of the best kind, whose care it is to creep into the minds of men, and to confirm in them false and noxious opinions concerning the fatal influence of the stars, and that it is not due to their marking and inspection of horoscopes, according to a kind of art which in reality has no existence." Thus it is admitted that at times, though by diabolical assistance and not from astromancy, valuable replies to questions may be obtained from astrologers. But in the same work he lays down what is the germ of the future tree when he says: "It is not altogether absurd to say that certain sidereal influences have some powers to cause differences in bodies alone. We see, for instance, that the seasons of the year vary as the sun approaches and recedes, and that certain things are increased and diminished by the waxings and wanings of the moon, such as sea-urchins, oysters,

and the wonderful ocean tides. But it does not follow that the wills of men are subject to the configuration of the stars." Herein, thinks Dr. Wedel, are to be found "the grounds for an almost complete rehabilitation of the pseudo-science."

Let us now come to the later philosophers, and to commence with, to Blessed Albertus Magnus, who, quoting from St Augustine, takes for granted that the stars govern the material elements. The *anima vegetabilis* of plants and the *anima sensibilis* of the lower animals, being wholly absorbed in matter, must, therefore, also be dominated by the heavens. What about the human soul? The stars can act on that, but not directly—*simpliciter*—only through the body. Thus we approach the resolution of the matter as it is to be found in the works of St Thomas. The human intellect and will are not corporeal, so the stars cannot affect them. But man's physical processes can affect the intellect, and hence indirectly the stars can do so. To put the matter colloquially: In spite of Dr. Samuel Johnson's views, the great majority of mankind does feel affected by the weather, not merely physically but psychically; it has an influence on his happiness and even on his behaviour. A bright sunny day does fill the heart with a greater sense of joy, not to say also of hope and courage, than one on which a snow-blizzard is raging under a leaden sky. But the weather is an index to happenings in the heavens. Therefore, the heavenly bodies, notably the sun, do exercise an effect, real if indirect, on the doings of man. If the sun, then why not the moon? The word "lunatic" gives

the reply of our forefathers, and so, too, the terms "Jovial," "Martial," "Saturnine," convey their response to the further question—Why not the planets? Observe, however, that these influences typified in the terms quoted are corporal only in the first place, and exercise whatever effect they may exercise on our actions only in a secondary and preventable manner. "The majority of men," says St Thomas, "in fact, are governed by their passions, which are dependent upon bodily appetites; in these the influence of the stars is clearly felt. Few indeed are the wise who are capable of resisting their animal instincts. Astrologers, consequently, are able to foretell the truth in the majority of cases, especially when they undertake general predictions. In particular predictions they do not attain certainty, for nothing prevents a man from resisting the dictates of his lower faculties. Wherefore the astrologers themselves are wont to say 'that the wise man rules the stars,' forasmuch, namely, as he rules his own passions." "*Sapiens homo dominatur astris*"—a phrase found throughout astrological literature, the *locus classicus* of which is in the *Summa* of St Thomas, but the original of which is, so far, untraced.

To put the matter in a nutshell: we need not be surly or ungenerous or ill-tempered, and thus upset what may be very important negotiations, just because our livers have been rendered rebellious by heavy, thundery weather. Then, it may be supposed, the astrologer comes in and adds: "Forewarned is forearmed, and, if you know what the stars are going to do to you, it will be easier to

avoid letting them do it, and then truly you will be the wise man who dominates the stars."

St Thomas did condemn the casting of horoscopes, or what was called judicial astrology. "If anyone," he says, "employs the observations of the stars for predicting fortuitous events, or such as happen by chance, or even for predicting with certainty a man's future actions, he does so falsely. In this sort of prophecy, the activity of demons is called into play." But the door once opened, the flood was too strong to be resisted, and horoscopes and judicial astrology came with it.

The distinction reminds one of another distinction, though not on quite the same lines, which was drawn at a time when "dowsing," or the use of the divining-rod, had also swept over Europe, as Sir William Barratt, F.R.S., tells us in his interesting little book on the subject. Apart from its use then and ever since up to this day for the finding of sources of water and, with less belief on the part of mankind, of veins of metal, this device at the time in question was used for far other purposes, such as the search for lost objects and, far more serious in its consequences, the discovery of the male parent of some illegitimate child. Anyone who has ever seen the divining-rod in action and observed how easy it would be to simulate the movements which, it is asserted, are involuntary in their nature, will recognise what mischievous power was thus placed in the hands of the diviner. Hence the matter went to the Inquisition, which made the very sensible reply that so long as it was used for finding water or the like there could be no

objection, since an inaccurate diagnosis would do no one material harm, but that its employment for what we may call criminal investigations could not be tolerated. Yet we may feel sure that here also many an effort was made to wring perilous secrets from their hiding-place by this method.

The gradual acceptance of the Copernican cosmogony, which showed how unimportant this little planet of ours was and is in the universe, gave a serious shock to astrology in the minds of men who could and did think, though, naturally enough, it did not reach, and never has reached, the uneducated classes. Great writers uttered their condemnations; Petrarch especially is to be mentioned, though no success waited upon his efforts. Pico della Mirandola was the first to make any impression, and Ariosto, and above all Rabelais, in his episode of the consultation of Her Trippa by Panurge and elsewhere, laughed the subject out of the serious consideration of most of Europe. What they did for the Continent Dean Swift did for the British Isles. In 1707 there was living in London a vigorous Protestant alarmist and prophet of plots named John Partridge, who published an annual Almanack which Swift determined to crush. Consequently, under the pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaffe,¹ he produced early in the next year his

¹ There is often a confusion about this name. There was a real person to whom it belonged who was the author of a play called *The Maid of the Mill*, and who fled from England to avoid a capital charge. Then it was used as a pseudonym by Swift and afterwards by Sir Richard Steele when editing the *Tatler*.

Predictions for the Ensuing Year, in which he announced that on March 29 at eleven o'clock at night, Partridge, the Almanack-maker, would die of fever. And sure enough on March 30 was issued a letter, by Swift of course, announcing the death of Partridge. Partridge had the pleasure of reading his own obituary notices, like Lord Brougham at a later day, and of hearing ballads lamenting his death sung and sold up and down the city. Further, his name was removed from the lists at Stationers' Hall, since the intelligence of his death was credited everywhere. Partridge indignantly denied that he was dead, and produced evidence that he was in the land of the living on the day that "the knave Bickerstaffe" asserted that he was dead, a statement that called forth Swift's *Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaffe, Esq.* The *Predictions* were killed and Partridge died a few years later.

Yet ever since I can remember, and of course very long before that, *Old Moore's Almanack* has been on sale in the streets and is apparently what the Americans call "a paying proposition." "Old Moore" was one Francis of that ilk who was born in 1657 and issued his first Almanack in 1699 as a subtle kind of advertisement for a certain pill with which he hoped to make his fortune as others have done since. The pill, if it ever sold, has long since disappeared from knowledge and recollection, but the Almanack still persists. At first, in fact up to 1701, the prophecies in it were only concerning the weather, but after that date commenced the general prophecies. *Zadkiel*, its

younger brother, is a lusty infant nearly one hundred years old. These facts show that Swift did not entirely exorcise the demon, which is vigorous enough to-day, more so than ever since the War, and provides a livelihood in nativity casting for a number of those persons with brains who, in the philosophy of the "Claimant," were to exist on those who had none but had money.

SOME EARLY INCIDENTS IN ENGLISH
MEDICINE AND SURGERY

SINCE all learning in the early ages of faith in England centred round Churchmen, it is not wonderful to find that medicine and surgery, and again law, were in the first instance mostly practised by those who had devoted their lives to a religious Order. Not wholly, for, as we shall see, quite early in the history of medicine there were lay exponents of the art. Surgery was from an early date forbidden to priests, and the lay surgeon was a necessity. In what follows an effort will be made to show, amongst other things, the relations between medicine and religious houses, and the writer at the very beginning must admit his debt to the learning and research of his late friend Sir Norman Moore, whose writings and conversations form the basis of the statements now to be made.

The first medical record with which I am acquainted is to be found in the *Ecclesiastical History* of the Venerable Bede, the father of English history. It relates to the death of a remarkable woman named Ethelthryth—commonly Latinised Etheldreda, whose name afterwards became shortened into Awdrey, just as Magdalen became Maudlin. She was born somewhere about 673, and founded an Abbey at Ely, then an island in the middle of the fens noted for its eels, as its

name indicates. This Abbey, like some others of the time, was for men and women, who occupied separate houses on either side of the church, but were all under the rule of an Abbot, or, as in this case, of an Abbess. The system went out of vogue after the Rule of St Benedict was introduced into England. Ethelthryth developed a tumour beneath the inferior maxilla—probably tubercular, Sir Norman Moore thought—and Cynefride, a physician, was called in to operate on it. It is an interesting thing to find that even at that time there were non-clerical practitioners, for he was one, since for many years almost the only educated people being clerics, most physicians were in Holy Orders. Cynefride opened the abscess and evacuated its contents. Relief followed, but we must suppose that the patient was generally affected, for not long afterwards she died and was buried. She was succeeded as Abbess by her sister Sexburg. Sixteen years after Ethelthryth's death, Sexburg desired to move her remains, and, as Bede tells us, "ordered some of the brothers to find a stone whereof to make a coffin for this purpose. They went on board ship, for the district of Ely is on every side encompassed with water and marshes and has no stones, and came to a small deserted city not far from thence which, in the language of the English, is called Grantaceaster [*i.e.*, Grantchester, near Cambridge, a former Roman station], and presently, near the city walls, they found a marble coffin most beautifully wrought and fitly covered with a lid of the same stone [in fact a Roman marble sarcophagus].

Perceiving, therefore, that the Lord had prospered their journey, they returned thanks to Him and carried it to the monastery." Then Bede tells us about the exhumation. Cynefride, not being a cleric, was outside the church, but he heard Sexburg call out "*Sit gloria nomini Domini*," and was shortly after called in and saw the body of Ethelthryth perfectly uncorrupt and, he said, with the wound which he had made, healed. What no doubt had happened was that the lips of the incision, after the pus had been evacuated, had come together. The body was re-buried in the marble sarcophagus and was there in 970 when King Edgar gave a charter to the Abbey, then Benedictine, for that charter speaks of Ethelthryth "who, with body uncorrupted, lasts even to this day in a white marble mausoleum."

Such is the first medical history in the records of our island. There are other lay practitioners mentioned in charters, for, when Henry II signs one resettling Holy Cross, near Winchester, amongst his co-signators were "Magister Hamon and Magister Ricardus, Medici." Holy Cross was a Hospital for poor, not for sick, and these two were probably his body physicians who were about to accompany him to the wars. Again to a charter to Abingdon Abbey given and signed by Henry I, "*Ego Henricus rex, redicionem, et donacionem hanc signavi*" there is also appended "*Ego Grimboldus medicus interfui*," and he was clearly also a layman, not a cleric.

It is worth while considering what kind of knowledge these men can have had of the human body

and its ailments. None of them had ever dissected a human body, although perhaps some of them had opened one and removed the viscera (as was certainly done somewhat later as we shall see) for embalming purposes or for partial burial. Cynefride could not have even read any manual but the *Liber Etymologiarum* of St Isidore of Seville, Doctor of the Church, an honourable affix which by no means indicates medical acquirements. Isidore, who lived from 560 to 636, was of a time when it was possible for any one man to possess all the knowledge that there was in the world. I suspect that St Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century was the last man of whom that could be said. Isidore at any rate in the book just mentioned—a huge rambling encyclopædia—gave to the world an account of everything that was then known or believed to be known, and amongst other things about medicine. He enumerates sixteen acute diseases, thirty-eight chronic, and twenty-one of the skin. Ethelthryth's ailment would then have been classed by her doctor amongst the Parotida "*duritie vel collectiones que ex febris aut ex aliquo alio nascuntur in aurium vicinitate: unde et parotide sunt appellate.*" The other and later physicians may have studied the treatises of the School of Salerno in Italy, the first important medical school in the world, founded at least as early as the ninth century, so celebrated that the city on its seals described itself as "*Civitas Hippocratica.*" Its University was founded in 1150, and it is a tragic thing to record that it had sunk so low after centuries of great fame and importance

that it had to be closed in 1817. From this school issued that famous work, the *Regimen Sanitatis Salerni*, in which are to be found many aphorisms of sound common sense applicable to-day, for example:

Si tibi deficiant Medici, Medici tibi fiant,
Has trias, mens hilaris, requies, moderata dieta.

In the still extant picture of Frater Johannes de Wallingford, Infirmarius at St Albans Abbey—that is, its Resident Physician and Surgeon—this early member of the profession is shown seeking its aid, no doubt in connection with some case which was then worrying him. When the *Regimen* was published, medical opinion was dominated by the theory of Humours, and another aphorism runs:

Gignit et humores melius vinum meliores.

The next clinical history to be touched on will, like one or two others, be that of a King, for very naturally such are the only accounts which have survived. William the Conqueror, in 1087, being then sixty years of age, lay ill at Rouen—a lethargic man instead of the active creature that had conquered and reorganised England. Always fat—“*immensæ obesitatis*,” says William of Malmesbury—he had now developed a monstrous “*obesitas ventris*,” so that the King of France sent him a coarse message to ask if he was lying in. William showed that “even in his ashes was some fire y-wreken,” for he swore that he would light ten thousand candles at the Mass post partum; arose from his bed and took and burnt Mantes, at

which place, as the older history books used to tell us, his horse reared and he incurred an injury from the pummel of his saddle from which he died. The mistake is due to an error on the part of the historian named above. William lived six weeks after this. The same writer tells us "*Consulti medici urinæ inspectione mortem citissiman prædixerunt.*" What could they learn from their inspection of the urine? Of course, they had no microscope and no chemical tests, nor for centuries afterwards. Sir Thomas Browne, the author of *Religio Medici*, I think it is who speaks of the "tedious labour of uroscopy," and in the well-known Dutch series of professional men, the doctor is represented looking earnestly through a large flask of urine. Sir Norman Moore thinks that they found William's urine deeply stained with bile, and that probably he had a new growth of the intestine, perhaps the sigmoid flexure, with secondary growths in the liver involving the bile duct. At sunrise on September 9, 1087, William was awakened by the ringing of the Angelus at the Cathedral of Rouen. He asked what it was, uttered a short prayer and expired.

John is the subject of the next clinical history, and it is recorded with considerable care by his physician, who was no less a person than the Abbot of Crokestead, as Sir Norman Moore calls it, more usually known as Swineshead in Lincolnshire—"In arte medicina eruditus," says the Chronicle. To this place John repaired after his disaster in the Wash. He had had a severe ducking and no doubt a bad chill, and ought to have gone to bed

and been sweated and kept on a low diet. If the Abbot had had his way he would no doubt also have been bled as was the custom at that time. And such treatment might have led to a complete recovery. John was a bad patient, and though the Abbot notes that on his arrival "*acutis correptus febribus*" he had a severe rigor, he insisted on eating a huge meal, after his custom (lampreys are said to have formed a substantial part of it), and drinking large quantities of new beer. Had his temperature been very high he would hardly have embarked on such a gastronomic adventure, but, if it was not at first, it obviously soon rose to an alarming extent. There were no clinical thermometers in those days, but the Abbot had a practised hand, and he tells us "*Febrilem in se calorem acuit fortiter et accendit.*" Very wisely he again urged John to stay where he was, and no doubt go to bed, but again the patient was obstinate and insisted on setting out, and did set out to ride to his Castle at Newark, distant some miles. Whether on the way there or shortly after his arrival, his condition became so alarming that the Abbot—treading no doubt with care on such delicate ground—asked him where he would wish to be buried. "To God and St Wulstan I commend my soul and body," was his reply. Worcester was the place where the shrine of St Wulstan, for whom John had a special devotion, was, and there John was buried; and there his effigy is to be seen to this day. The Abbot made an autopsy, not for motives of pathological curiosity, but "*ut honestius portaretur,*" for it was several days' journey to Worcester,

and what he removed, namely the viscera, he took to Swineshead and there separately buried. They had the curious habit in those days of burying bits of people in different places, as we shall see from some instances now to be related. When Earl de Clare, one of the signatories of Magna Charta, died, his widow had him buried in the chancel of Tewkesbury Abbey. She afterwards married Richard, Earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry III. When she came to die, her second husband still being alive, she expressed a wish to be buried with her first. Her second demurred, and it was finally settled that her heart should be buried with de Clare and the rest of her body where her second husband was eventually to be buried—namely, at Beaulieu, in Hampshire, not far from Netley. The Earl of Cornwall's son went even farther than this, for, after his death, and I suppose in accordance with his directions, his heart was buried at Tonbridge, his intestines at Canterbury, and Tewkesbury was the residuary legatee. One sometimes sees in English churches a miniature tomb with a small figure of a knight on it or a pair of stone arms holding up a stone heart. These are what are called "Heart Shrines," and are said to mark a partial burial of this kind. There is a miniature Bishop in full vestments on a small tomb in Salisbury Cathedral. This may be a heart shrine or it may be a tomb of a boy Bishop. Such a person was elected every year on the Feast of St Nicholas (Santa Claus), the patron of children, which occurs on December 6, and held office until the Feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28,

during which time he and his canons, appointed by him from amongst the choir-boys, were dressed in the appropriate vestments of their elders, and it was directed that, if he died during his term of office, he should be buried with full episcopal ceremonies. It must probably always remain uncertain which kind of tomb this is. From this habit of partial burial arose another custom which has given rise to a curious misconception. In some ill-informed books the statement will be found that a Papal Bull was issued which forbade the practice of human dissection. No person at all acquainted with the history of human anatomy, but of course few are that, could credit that statement, for, at the very time that the regulation is said to have been in force, body physicians and surgeons of the Popes were living in Rome making dissections and publishing the accounts of their discoveries and usually dedicating their works to the Pontiff himself. It was a great time for an anatomist when he could immortalise himself by no more out-of-the-way discovery than that of the Fallopian tube, which owes its name to Gabriel Fallopius, a canon and Professor of Anatomy at Padua and Pisa, who first described it. The majority of names attached to anatomical structures belong to Italians or persons teaching in Italy, like Stenson. The facts are these: When nobles went to the Crusades they often agreed with their friends and fellow-combatants that if they lost their lives their bodies should be brought back to Europe for burial. One can imagine what difficulties this gave rise to. Several large dead—perhaps some time dead—

Crusaders would make a very inconvenient addition to a small ship, loaded with persons coming back from Palestine, and I expect that embalming methods were not very efficacious. The survivors conceived the plan of boiling down their dead friends and taking their bones home for burial. The Pope, rightly or wrongly, thought that this was an improper proceeding, and forbade it, under pain of excommunication, as is very clearly indicated in the Bull which he issued. Such is the explanation, but the dismemberment for separate burials does not seem to have been forbidden.

I am reminded by John's case of another very interesting clinical account of a royal patient. It is not mediæval, and so I will not linger over it further than to say that the physicians who reported on the condition of James I, sum up his habits in connection with liquor in the most comprehensive statement that one can well imagine: "*In potu peccat quoad qualitatem, quantitatem, frequentiam, tempus, ordinem.*" To come to an end of early doctors, I must not omit to speak of that very remarkable woman St Hildegarde, born in Germany, 1098, Abbess of Rupertsberg, near Bingen on the Rhine, who was one of the greatest among the great Abbesses of the Middle Ages, and dealt as an equal with Popes and potentates of various kinds. Amongst other things she wrote several very remarkable medical works, besides a Natural History and other books, all of them displaying vast knowledge so far as the period provided it. Lastly let us not forget that in the list of Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians the

first two names are those of priests. The first, on account of his seniority, is Chambre; the second, far more distinguished and the first President, is that luminary of our profession, Thomas Linacre, the real founder of the College, the bosom friend of Sir Thomas More and of Erasmus, who, in a letter from the Continent, writes a grievous account of his illness—acute tonsillitis, I think, from his description—and adds: “I have no Linacre here to cure me.”

To turn to medical practice for a moment: The *Breviarium Bartholomei*¹ is a practice of medicine compiled, early in the thirteenth century, by that remarkable man, John Mirfield, a divine, indeed a Dominican, who was connected with the hospital after which he named his book. It has been carefully described by Sir Norman Moore. Mirfield often quotes from the practice which he saw under his master, whose name is not given. Amongst other things he describes the case of a woman who had lost her speech—probably hysterical aphonia, from the rapid cure. The master rubbed her palate with a preparation known as theodoricon emperisticon mixed with a little diacastorium. The woman recovered, and no wonder if she was told the names of the drugs. She was much pleased with the skill shown by her physician. In another case of carbuncle where death was apparently imminent, the master thought that nothing but a large dose of theriacum could cure, and *post hoc* or *propter hoc* after a dose of two drachms the patient did in fact recover. This preparation was also

¹ *I.e.*, of the Hospital of St Bartholomew.

known as mithridatum, and certainly in all its vicissitudes contained opium. It began with thirty-eight ingredients, rose to fifty-three, and finally contained seventy-five. It says volumes for the conservatism of the profession that if we date Mirfield's master at 1215 or so the drug had a run of more than five hundred years, for, in 1745, Heberden (of Heberden's Ink, a preparation of iron used when I was a student) thought it worth while to write an essay called *Antitheriaca*, the object of which was to decry the use of this drug, which by that time contained, or was supposed to contain, ingredients the very nature of which no living person was acquainted with. We must not forget that these shot-gun prescriptions did not die an easy death or a very far-off one. The Chelsea Pensioner, which had, if I remember aright, some twenty-eight ingredients, was still quoted in the books, as an example of how not to do it, but of how it had actually been done in recent times, also during my own studies in the arid regions of pharmacy as they were forty years ago. The division of the *Breviarium* is interesting as showing the subjects insisted upon. The parts were: Of fevers; of affections of the whole body; of affections of the head, neck, and throat; of the chest; of the abdomen; of the pelvic organs; of the legs; of boils (it is curious that an entire section should be devoted to this subject); of fractures and dislocations; of joints; of simple medicine; of compound medicine; of purgatives; of the regimen of health. Chronic rheumatism Mirfield treated by inunctions of warm olive oil, which was to simmer

while one said certain prayers and the verses of the psalm "*Quare fremuerunt gentes*" as far as that one which reads "*Postula a me et dabo tibi gentem hereditatem tuam.*" These were all to be repeated seven times. This is neither superstition nor even ultra-piety, but a method convenient for the day of one-handed clocks (and they in the tower), of measuring out what Sir Norman on trial found to be exactly fifteen minutes. Of goose-grease says Mirfield :

Istud pinguamen
 Dat gutte cuique levamen.
 Anseris unguentum.
 Valet hoc super omne talentum.

In other words, this strange concoction, which contains a great many other things, including the flesh of a recently skinned cat, is sovereign remedy for gout. Times pass, and fashions change, but no one finds anything more suitable for that disease than the product of *Colchicum autumnale*, which grows and flowers, I feel sure, for that purpose alone. I have often looked at its pretty autumn flowers and admired a thing which is both beautiful and useful.

Before leaving Mirfield it is curious that even in his day—that is, the early thirteenth century—we should meet the complaint that medicine and surgery have become separate lines of practice. He cannot be a good physician who neglects every part of surgery, and, on the other hand, a surgeon is good for nothing who is without knowledge of medicine. So says Mirfield, and also says, to exhibit his surgical knowledge, that while a rib

will take twenty days to unite, a humerus or a femur will take forty, and that union takes longer in the old than in the young. In spite of his theriacum and goose-grease there was a good deal of shrewd observation in the book.

Before passing to the topic of general hospitals, I think I may usefully devote a few moments to saying something about the Infirmarys attached to Abbeys, for they were amongst the earliest places for isolation of the sick, and as we are perfectly familiar with the rules of the Benedictine Foundations we know just what they did. There was always a separate Infirmary. I have often wondered why that at Fountains should have been built over a running stream. The Infirmary had its own Chapel, and near it usually was the Misericorde, of which more in a moment. The Infirmaryman, who was one of the monks, was the resident medical attendant, and his duties are fully set forth. When a sick monk was sent to him he was to have that monk's bed fetched from the common "Dorter," or sleeping-place, from which it would appear there was no distinct hospital bedding, for it is bedding which is alluded to. He is told how he is to serve the sick: "He must be gentle and good-tempered, kind, compassionate for the sick, and willing as far as possible to gratify their needs with affectionate sympathy." Some of the monks might not need to be placed in the Infirmary, yet required treatment, and the Infirmaryman would direct them according to the Rule—a model of common sense—and see that such were excused their tasks or much of them, and allowed gentle exercise in the open

air when the weather permitted. Amongst other things the Infirmarian was the general venesection, and the Rule has full directions for this important business. Everybody, where there was no contra-indication, was bled four times a year, if possible in February, April, September, and October. In an Abbey the occupants were dealt with in batches of from two to six, the Abbot announcing at dinner on some day that those who sat at such and such a table were to be blooded that week. There was only one room in any Abbey where there was a fire (apart, of course, from the Abbot's house and the Guest-house), and that was the Calefactory, and there the monks went to be blooded. Before the operation they might eat if they chose. After it they went to the Misericorde, where they were treated to somewhat better food than was ordinarily partaken of in the "Frater," or common refectory, and further were allowed great relaxation of the Rule for the time being—that is, they could lie down, sleep, and so on, as they felt inclined, and either go into the church for services or not as they might judge best for their enfeebled condition.

To show the extreme minuteness with which the Benedictine Rule treats of this important occurrence it is stated that "if he [the recently operated on] liked to go to Hours [that is, the daily office] in choir [*i.e.*, in the church] he was to sit [of course everybody else stood, or rather rested against a Misericorde]; he was never to bend down or do penance of any kind, for fear of displacing the bandages, and he was to go out of church before the

others, for fear of having his arm rubbed if he were to walk in the ranks."

Such were the monastic conditions with regard to venesection, and we may feel sure that other people—for of course everybody was "let blood" regularly then and for many years afterwards—were treated more or less on the same lines.

From these monastic institutions I may now turn to those of a general character and briefly consider the history of one or two.

There were various kinds of hospitals (apart from such as were almshouses), ordinary and leper. When we meet with such a name for a village, for example, as "Spittal in the Street," we have to do with the site of a mediæval hospital situated on a Roman road or strata. And in the name of such a place as Burton Lazars we have the remembrance of a leper hospital. Leprosy, as we all know, was the scourge of Europe in the Middle Ages. Was what was then called leprosy what we know by that name? Many have thought not, but the fact is that the descriptions do tally with the modern disease, and the picture at Munich of St Elizabeth of Hungary tending lepers does represent persons suffering from what we call leprosy; indeed, Virchow said that Holbein must have made studies in a leper hospital, so accurate is his picture. In the fifteenth century it began to die out. I fancy that severe cases of lupus and other like ailments got mixed up with true leprosy, and the authorities seem to believe that the leprosy "as white as snow" spoken of in the Bible was really leucoderma. However, leprosy—the genuine article—was so

prevalent that at one time there were 19,000 leper hospitals in Europe, and of these 95 were in Great Britain and 14 in Ireland. These and other hospitals must have been for the most part small, for we are told that there were 4 ordinary and 5 leper hospitals in Norwich and 5 leper hospitals in King's Lynn. Both of these places had much contact with the Low Countries, and were thus subject to the contagion, but neither of them was what could be described as populous. There was an order of Knights of St Lazarus, an offshoot from the old Order of the Knights Hospitallers of St John, which, by the way, still exists on the Continent as an Order of Chivalry, but has nothing to do with the modern Order of St John of Jerusalem in London, though the similarity of name, which I think very unfortunate, would suggest such nexus. This order of St Lazarus consisted of one hundred Knights, who alone of all the Military Orders were permitted to marry, and its purpose was to nurse lepers in the Holy Land. Up to 1253 it was a rule that their Grand Master must himself be a leper of noble rank, which shows that the disease extended to all ranks of the people. At the time mentioned it was found impossible to discover an eligible candidate, and the reigning Pope, Innocent III, abrogated the rule. As to the ordinary hospitals for sick people, there were a multitude of these, and from amongst them I will speak of two, both well known. Thomas à Becket, better known as St Thomas of Canterbury, was martyred in 1170 and canonised two years afterwards, and the place where his remains were laid soon became a place

of pilgrimage. The persons making that journey would naturally collect in or about Southwark on the Old Kent Road for their ride or walk to Canterbury. We know of one famous company which collected at the Tabard Inn, where Harry Bailey then was landlord, for their exploits form the theme of the *Canterbury Tales*. But the really pious pilgrim would perhaps rather avoid an inn, and the impecunious one would be glad of a gratuitous lodging, and so, in 1213, the Benedictine Abbey at Bermondsey set up a branch house in Southwark which they named after St Thomas of Canterbury, which house was to be a temporary lodging-place for those setting out next day on their pilgrimage, and such it remained for many years. But in 1379 it is clear that it had become something more than that, for there is extant the will of one Gilbert Chaumpneys, who left, among other bequests, three beds with linen for each and sixpence apiece (a not inconsiderable sum then) for the "infirmi." That word tells the story, for in all cases of almshouses "pauperes" is the word employed. Henry VIII, under the plea of superstition, seized upon this hospital because, like every other kind of thing at that time, whether hospital, guild merchant or other kind of guild, it had a religious side, and absorbed its funds. It was the common lot of schools, hospitals, and guilds at that time. The inhabitants, who, no doubt, had found the hospital useful and missed it, prevailed upon Henry to sell back to them their own property, and he, I suppose by way of showing that he was not entirely destitute of generous impulses, let them have it

back for a substantial sum of money. At the same time he insisted that the name should be changed from that of St Thomas of Canterbury to that of St Thomas the Apostle. Henry had a great idea of kings, and did not like to encourage those who crossed their path as Thomas à Becket had done in his time, and he insisted on every place in England which bore his name, changing it. This little history always makes me think of Mr. William Sykes, whom one may imagine returning one's watch for cash down, but with the stipulation that in future his name should be inscribed on it as donor. Henry did not go so far as that, but his successor, Edward's, name is attached to many places the history of which was that of St Thomas's Hospital. That ancient and famous institution was rebuilt in 1870, and, as everybody knows, stands in Lambeth on the opposite side of the Thames to the Houses of Parliament.

St Bartholomew's, which may perhaps dispute with the Hôtel Dieu in Paris the right to be considered the most distinguished hospital in the world, has quite a different history. At the Court of Henry I, in 1120, just before the catastrophe of the *White Ship*, in which his son William was drowned, there was what Hamlet would call a "water-fly" named Raherus. Sometimes he has been described as the King's Jester, but really he was an amusing character of rather humble origin who got into Court circles and remained there on account of his pleasant social attributes. After that catastrophe, after which, as our history books used to tell us, the King "never smiled again," jesters

and "water-flies" were no doubt at a considerable discount, and besides that there is no doubt that Raherus was very deeply affected by what happened and did seriously repent himself of his career, which, it seems, contained incidents which caused him much regret. And, in accordance with the ideas of the day, he made a pilgrimage to Rome in penance for his sins. While he was there he was taken seriously ill and his death was expected. He made a vow that, if he were saved, he would build a hospital in London, and when he had made a complete recovery he started for England to carry out his promise. On the way he had a vision, which very much terrified him, that he had fallen into a deep pit and could not get out, and that eventually he was extricated by a dignified personage who told him that he was St Bartholomew, and that when he got to London he was to build a church in his honour at Smoothfield and name that church and his hospital after him. Raherus, whatever one may think of this vision, was so much impressed by it that when he returned to London he got from the King a grant of land at Smoothfield—now called Smithfield—and there he built a church and house for Augustinian canons and close by it a hospital, and to both of them he gave the name of St Bartholomew, as he had promised to do in his vision. Those who know Smithfield now will find it hard to imagine what it was like then. It stood outside the walls of London in the open country close to Newgate, and even then was a near neighbour to St Sepulchre's Church, at which years afterwards the bell tolled every Monday morning

for the weekly batch of criminals, executed at a time when there were so many counts involving the death penalty for those found guilty. On the other side were some ploughed fields, and beyond them a dense forest in which deer, wild boars, and the great wild cattle, of which a few herds still survive under careful nurture, roamed about. Into the history of St Bartholomew's Hospital I cannot go, but the question must at least be answered: How did it survive Henry VIII? The Augustinian Priory, of which Rahere, who became a priest and a monk, was the first Prior—his tomb is still to be seen in the church—was suppressed and all its funds confiscated. For years—in fact, up to quite a recent date—parts of the church were used as a dwelling-house and a fringe factory. The Hospital won through, perhaps because Rahere by a lucky inspiration had made it quite independent of the Priory, and it may not, therefore, have come under the notice of the King. I suppose the reason why his image appears above the Hospital gate which was erected in the time of Queen Anne is that he let the place alone. It was surely a unique incident in his career.

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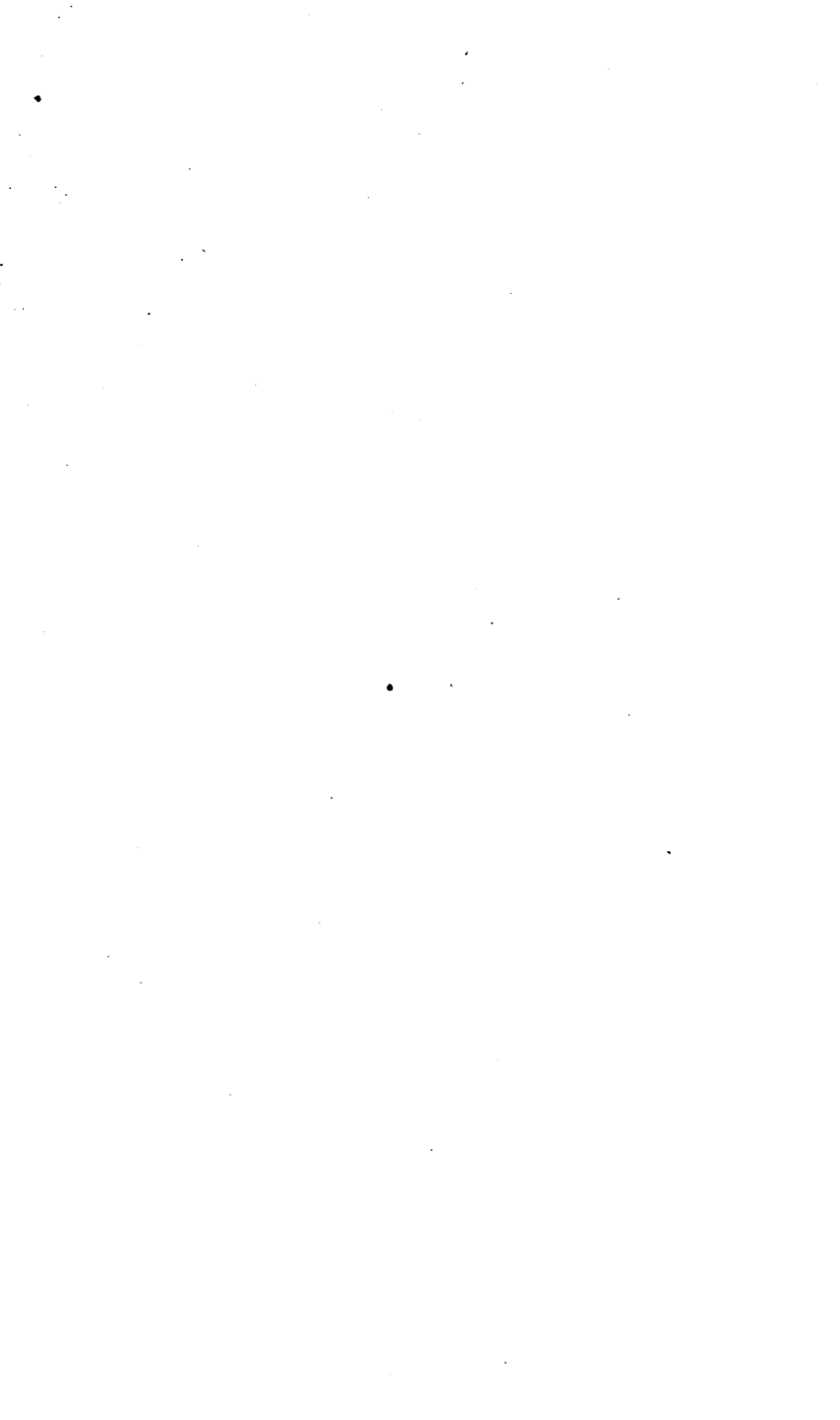
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